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### Teacher evaluation as a tool to support on-going teacher development and improvement within the context of IB PYP schools

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**Teacher evaluation as a tool to support on-going teacher development and improvement within the context of IB PYP schools**

Sandra Anne Mulligan

A thesis for the degree of Doctor of Education (EdD)

University of Bath

Department of Education

July 2015

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## **Abstract**

Commonly, teacher evaluations function as summative appraisal mechanisms of teacher performance and effectiveness, as accountability measures and assurances of quality instruction to educational stakeholders. Recently, greater interest in the potential for evaluations to contribute to improvements in teaching and learning has emerged. The use of professional teaching standards and evaluation rubrics represents a significant advance in the design of evaluation tools and procedures. Continuing implementation challenges however, means the potential for evaluations to notably enhance teachers' professional development is far from realized within many educational contexts. The traditional focus on the individual within evaluations also fails to recognize the collaborative work of teaching teams and to capitalize on the potential of teachers to support improvement in each other's practice.

This inquiry explored the circumstances under which evaluations might promote professional development at the individual level and within teaching teams. The study is located within an international school, which utilizes the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program curriculum. The research question driving the inquiry was; how can teachers and principals within IB PYP schools achieve a focus on professional development and systematic learning within teacher evaluation?

An Instructional Rounds protocol was employed to promote a focus on professional development within this qualitative case study. Fullan's Change Theory guided the implementation and analysis of change in the form and function of evaluations within the school.

Findings suggest viable and valuable professional learning can be incorporated into and supported during evaluations. A structured process, incorporating greater frequency of feedback, check-ins, dialogue and collaborative work between supervisors and teachers is needed to produce the monitoring mechanism and sustained gentle pressure necessary to support on-going professional learning. Redefining and broadening concepts of improvement, of involved leadership and professional development is important. Limited focus on specific goals and connecting peers with similar goals encourages commitment to improvement efforts.

## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction to the study**

A variety of educational stakeholders, including governments, the business community, governors and parents are increasingly demanding assurances of quality instruction and improved educational outcomes. This has led to increased calls for accountability and assurances in relation to teacher effectiveness. Teacher evaluation systems have traditionally functioned as this summative mechanism for assessing teacher performance. In recent years, however, a growing body of research (for example, Toth and Rochman (2008), Weisberg, Sexton, Mulhern and Keely (2009) Stronge (2011), Kelly (2012), the Gates Foundation (2012), Danielson 2008, 2011, 2013), Darling-Hammond (2010, 2013) Marzano (2007, 2013), has documented a mounting list of inadequacies and challenges inherent within traditional evaluation systems.

Emerging criticisms highlight the inability of conventional narrative systems to articulate and provide robust evidence about the standards and criteria against which teachers are evaluated. There is also concern about their lack of rigor as evaluative tools in accurately measuring the pedagogical skills of educators. Coupled with this disquiet lies a conjoined concern among policy makers, researchers and the teaching community about the implementation of many teacher evaluative systems. Processes are often described as superficial, cursory, and/or subjective (Papay, 2012). Implementation of some processes has been characterized as time-consuming, with lessons viewed as highly structured and inconsistent with regular practice. Many practices have been documented as infrequent and unsystematic (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2010 in the US). Reports of systems that traditionally fail to discriminate between effective and ineffective teachers, where few tenured teachers are rated unsatisfactory and almost none are dismissed also persist (Tucker, 1997, Donaldson, 2007). Teachers themselves have been among the ardent critics of evaluative systems, with many finding the process a meaningless exercise, stemming from required bureaucratic school rituals. Accounts of low teacher investment and high dissatisfaction in evaluative processes are not uncommon. Researchers like Holland (2005) and Marshall (2005) report that few teachers receive meaningful actionable feedback or support for improving instruction.

These concerns have led to a recent growing consensus on the need for teacher evaluation reform. This is providing an impetus for the development of professional standards and evaluation rubrics for teachers premised on research-based teaching strategies found to influence student progress and achievement positively (Marzano, 2013, the Gates Foundation, 2012, Danielson 2008, 2011, 2013). While these represent significant advances on previous evaluative procedures, Danielson (2013) highlights however that simply adopting standards and rubrics will not change practice.

Amidst these circumstances, Papay (2012) argues that while developing valid and reliable evaluation systems to effectively assess teacher performance is important, “recent debate by policy makers and effects by researchers has focused much too narrowly, on this summative measurement purpose of teacher evaluation.” Papay indicates a need to refocus on a “much broader conception” and a reevaluation of the purpose of teacher evaluation as a means to drive instructional improvement and impact positively on student learning. He questions the validity of focusing efforts to improve instruction primarily on a summative evaluation of teachers’ current practice. This approach, he contends, is based on a flawed premise that teachers already possess the knowledge and skills to refine their practice and will be sufficiently motivated or pressured by evaluation results to improve. Papay (2012) challenges, purely summative measures of teacher performance fail to directly support improvement in the quality of instruction, learning and achievement.

Recently, more interest has emerged in current educational discourse in a dual purpose for teacher evaluation: to provide assessment and accurate measurement of teacher effectiveness and as a means to drive improvements in teaching and learning (Papay, 2012, Bryk, Harding & Greenberg, 2012, Darling-Hammond, Amrein-Beardsley, Haertel & Rothstein, 2012). This current study focuses primarily on this second role of teacher evaluation and explores how teacher evaluation might function as an effective mechanism to drive professional development, learning, and growth and thereby improve instruction.

## **1.2 Rationale and Study Background**

As a primary school principal in an international school, in which the study was located, implementation of a teacher evaluation process lies within my professional remit and responsibility. Most international schools operate outside the influence of national teacher appraisal frameworks. While many schools seek accreditation from a number of

international bodies (for example, the Council of International Schools, or its American counterparts, the North Eastern Association of Schools and Colleges or the Western Association of Schools and Colleges), these accreditation organizations do not provide schools with systems to evaluate teachers in relation to expected standards and practices. The inexistence of a compulsory system together with challenges I experienced with the school's previous approach to evaluation was the initial driving force behind this study. The former system (reproduced in Appendix A) comprised 16 personal and professional responsibilities detailed in 2 checklists: a Classroom Observation Instrument and Elementary School Checklist. I found little alignment between teachers' defined responsibilities and the indicators on the appraisal instrument. These seemed to be a list of individual practices with no indicator of how they related to particular areas of pedagogy. Observer notes and/or a check mark placed on a continuum from 'demonstrated effectively' to 'not in evidence' indicated performance levels. Although documentation states the aim of the process is to "provide direction and assistance to teachers in their professional development," I felt the process was summative in nature as teachers' participation was limited to a signed comment once appraisals were completed and outcomes of principals' appraisals determined teachers' professional development focus. In my professional judgment the tool did not comprise of a reliable set of teaching competencies, explain specific levels of performance or actively motivate teacher participation. Teachers new to the school were evaluated in their first year, followed by an evaluation the second year should initial results prove unsatisfactory. Teachers who had been at the school for 3 years were evaluated every second year communicating, I felt, that on-going professional growth linked to instructional practice was not required for experienced teachers. I was irritated with what felt like ineffective interaction with teachers in regard to teacher appraisal. Upon reflection, I was perhaps guilty of the not-unusual perspective, documented in the literature review, of viewing teacher appraisal as a process that merely had to be undertaken. It seemed to be an exercise in compliance that involved 'ticking the boxes', and was quite an ineffective means of holding teachers accountable for instructional practice and improvement efforts. I communicated with and sought to support teachers' instructional practices and was active in promoting professional development opportunities but my efforts in both these areas were fundamentally different from a systematic, focused attempt to support professional development linked to appraisal.

An additional motivation for the study came from a very pragmatic need to address urgently the following recommendation related to faculty appraisal contained in a joint reaccreditation report from the school's two accreditation bodies, the Council of

International Schools (CIS) and the North Eastern Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC):

“The Visiting Team recommends that the Administration Team review the appraisal process with staff in all areas of the school so there is a clear and consistent approach and a better understanding of how professional development links to the goals identified in the appraisal process” (CIS/NEASC, School Reaccreditation Report 2012).

In the elementary division a system, which could effectively reflect and further support development of the required standards and implementation practices of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program (IB PYP) was needed. The school’s curriculum framework was another important consideration for any new evaluation process, which would emerge.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

These driving forces led to the aim of this research inquiry, an exploration of how teacher evaluation might function as a tool to support on-going teacher development and improvement in IB PYP schools. The main research question guiding this inquiry is:

How can teachers and principals within IB PYP schools become more actively involved in an appraisal system that focuses on professional development and systematic learning?

Related questions that guided this study were:

How might appraisal be effectively operationalized as a professional development tool at the school level to support on-going teacher development in implementing the standards and practices of the IB PYP?

What professional benefits and challenges might accrue for teachers and principals during the implementation process?

### **1.4 The school context**

The study was conducted in an international Catholic primary school situated in a major Asian capital city. The primary school is part of a larger kindergarten to grade 12 school.

The primary faculty comprises 12 classroom teachers, a PYP Coordinator, the Primary School principal (the author of the current study). 20 single subject teachers lead teaching and learning in the host language, religious education, the arts, sports, library and ICT skills. The large number of single subject teachers is reflective of languages being offered at four different levels of proficiency. These single subject teachers span kindergarten to grade 12. Approximately 260 students are enrolled in the primary section. There are two classes at each primary level from grades 1-6. The school is one of the older international schools in the city, having been founded in the 1960s. In 2007, after a two-year period of research and trial implementation, the school was authorized to offer the IB Primary Years Program. The decision to adopt the program was reached as it was felt there was good alignment between the IB and the school's mission and philosophy. The PYP also offered a sustainable framework for the on-going development of the primary curriculum. In addition, as the IB Diploma Program had been in place in the secondary division for more than 20 years, the school already had experience working with the IB Organization. Turnover of primary teachers is relatively low. Most teachers remain at the school for at least 4 years; the majority of the primary faculty is at the school 6-10 years while some have been at the school for more than 10 years. The hiring policy specifically aims to achieve a balance of relatively newly qualified teachers with at least 2 years experience in the PYP, mid-career and late-career teachers. It is felt this helps introduce new ideas and vibrancy into the faculty while maintaining a degree of experience, sustainability and balance, which supports the on-going development of initiatives at the school.

### **1.5 The research initiative**

The inquiry was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 involved the development of an appraisal tool that would be used for teacher evaluation. Any tool or implementation process chosen, however, must be capable of addressing and achieving three broad objectives. It must promote and support a professional development focus within teacher appraisal, incorporate the required teaching standards and practices of the IB PYP, and address the recommendations of the school's two accreditation bodies related to teacher appraisal.

Phase 2 of the study examining the appraisal system in action and its ability to promote professional learning and development, was accomplished through empirical data gathering principally teacher self-assessments and reflections, in-depth interviews, and a focus group interview. Classroom observations using an Instructional Rounds protocol

(Roberts 2012, City et al. 2009) were significant in facilitating the inclusion and consideration of the collaborative work of teaching teams linked to appraisal. These empirical methods facilitated an exploration of both the primary and related research questions.

## **1.6 Approach adopted for the study**

A qualitative, case study approach was adopted for this study. A case study can “portray what it is like to be in a particular situation, to catch the close-up reality and thick description: of participants lived experiences of, thoughts about and feelings for a situation” (Geertz 1973, cited in Cohen et al, 2000, p. 182). This type of framework will facilitate the core aim of the study: to examine teachers’ engagement, perspectives and insights regarding the effectiveness of the evaluation process as a means to drive professional learning and development in one international school. Additionally, the inquiry is located within the interpretative paradigm, rooted in an acceptance of the belief that interpretive perspectives provide a means of “dealing with the direct experience of people, in specific contexts” (Cohen et al. 2000, p. 19).

The IB mandates collaborative practice as a central implementation standard within the PYP. Johnson (2012) proposes that the current individual orientation of teacher evaluation often ignores collaborative work carried out in teams and fails to capitalize on the potential of some teachers to improve the performance of others. An approach, based solely on evaluating individual teachers, she argues, will always be limited, as any improvement in expertise will be concentrated in individual classrooms rather than extended throughout the school. This inquiry seeks to adopt an approach to teacher evaluation based on individual teachers and those with whom they collaborate in the context of their teaching teams.

## **1.7 Theoretical framework informing the study**

A new evaluation process would constitute a significant change from the existing teacher appraisal system in place at the school in which the study is located. Fullan’s (2008) framework for managing and leading change was chosen as the theoretical framework to guide and analyse efforts to change the appraisal system to one with an explicit and primary focus on professional learning and development. This particular framework was chosen as it is “well grounded in applied problem areas” (Fullan 2008, p. 10) particularly in Ontario public school systems and in the UK. Thus the framework has

been open “to scrutiny in terms of the strategies themselves, and of course the strategies’ intended and unintended consequences” (ibid. p. 10). Fullan stresses the benefit of theory in informing and guiding action and asserts theories can “practically and insightfully guide the understanding of complex situations and point to actions likely to be effective under the circumstances” (ibid. p. 1). They provide a “handle on the underlying reasons, really the underlying thinking, behind actions and their consequences” (ibid. p. 16), “help make sense of the real world (ibid. p. 1) and enhance “the capacity to reflect on actions and to gain conceptual insight while doing so” (ibid. p. 2). Fullan’s framework incorporates and addresses specifically many of the constructs and variables I face and need to work with to achieve a focus on continuing professional learning and development within appraisals. It makes use of such strategies as collaboration with and among peers, capacity building, and continuing professional development and incorporates a focus on the school as a system. For these reasons, Fullan’s theory of change was a particularly pertinent framework for this study.

## **1.8 Guiding Methodology**

Roberts (2012) highlights a notable dilemma in relation to achieving a focus on teacher learning and development within educational settings when he poses the question: “How can educators focus on or reorganize for learning when we’re really organized for judgment?” This is particularly salient to the process of teacher evaluation. Roberts contends, “most educators are currently working at, or near, the limits of their current knowledge and practice” (ibid. p. ix). If we are willing to entertain that idea it becomes particularly important to consider what structures and processes might effectively support efforts aimed at instructional improvement. Roberts (2012) proposes that one way schools might achieve this focus is through the process of conducting instructional rounds. Using an instructional rounds protocol, principals and teachers reallocate time within their regular school day to observe and collectively discuss instructional practices.

The instructional rounds approach is based on the premise that “collaborative observation and analysis of instructional practice, done routinely and within a disciplined stance that honors evidence and predictive validity, helps individuals and schools focus their individual and collective learning toward improved learning for students” (ibid. p. 87). The strategy is based on a view of “practitioners as co-producers and learning partners, in the challenge of sharing their own learning struggles” as they seek to engage in the processes of learning more about instruction and solving instructional



problems (ibid. p. 89) The aim is to increase educators' capacity to solve these challenges collectively.

The process of instructional rounds has been adopted as a key research methodology in this inquiry as the protocol involves a collaborative focus on instruction, conducive to working with both individual teachers and their teaching teams. This supports one of the core objectives of the study, an exploration of ways to focus on continuing professional development within teaching teams during an appraisal process. A firm link between Fullan's change theory and the instructional rounds process can also be established as both are premised on a common precept that reform, "if it works at all, works by systematically increasing the learning capacity of individuals and organizations in which they work (Fullan, 2008 p.12)

### **1.9 Thesis Structure**

Following this introductory chapter, chapter 2 reviews current literature in the field of teacher evaluation research. Chapter 3 outlines Fullan's theoretical framework chosen to inform implementation and analysis of the changeover to the new appraisal system. Instructional Rounds, the peer observational protocol incorporated into the study to achieve a focus on individual and collaborative learning linked to appraisal is outlined in chapter 4, while chapter 5 details the research methodology and methods used to address the research questions within the study. Analysis of phase 2 of the inquiry; the implementation of the appraisal process is contained in chapter 6, while analysis and discussion of Instructional Rounds is covered in chapter 7. Chapter 8, the final chapter provides a review and outlines the conclusions to the study.

## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of current academic research, policy literature and empirical practices related to teacher evaluation. Of particular focus is how teacher evaluation might function as a means to support teachers' continuing professional development. A summary analysis of prominent themes and findings within the literature is provided.

The initial discussion aims to locate teacher evaluation within policy frameworks related to growing calls for greater teacher accountability mechanisms from the 1980s onward. Subsequent discussion explores the dual purpose of teacher evaluation as mentioned in the literature; to provide an assessment and accurate measure of effective teaching and as a mechanism to drive professional development and impact student learning. An inevitable tension exists between these summative and formative evaluative functions. Teachers will feel undoubtedly uneasy discussing challenges and having their practice observed under conditions where they feel their capabilities are being judged. It is my hope that this study will go some way in addressing this challenge by highlighting ways improvements in pedagogy can be achieved through appraisal without compromising summative objectives. Two commonly used teacher evaluation frameworks, those of Danielson and the Marzano Research Foundation are used as the basis for exploring the challenges involved in using teacher evaluative processes as a mechanism to support continuing teacher development. Teacher evaluation within international schools is also considered. Finally, the chapter closes with a review of recent recommendations from the field of teacher evaluation research.

### **2.2 Teacher evaluation as a quality control mechanism**

Mounting documentation in the public sphere, it can be argued, illustrates that policy makers have increasingly sought to use evaluation procedures as part of a highly politicized system for holding teachers publicly accountable for student achievement. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2009, 2013) provides evidence that, faced with growing demands from a variety of stakeholders including governments, the business community, and parents for assurances of quality instruction and evidence of educational outcomes, countries are embracing teacher evaluation systems as quality control mechanisms. "Of 28 countries surveyed in the

OCED Review on Evaluation and Assessment Frameworks for Improving School Outcomes, 22 reported having policy frameworks (national or state laws or regulations) in place to regulate teacher appraisal” (OECD, 2013, p. 16). Even those countries without policy frameworks reported arrangements for teachers to receive professional feedback on instructional practices. The OECD highlights that existing schemes of teacher evaluation in educational systems of member countries take multiple and diverse forms and that large variations in approaches range from highly defined and detailed national systems to more informal structures left to the discretion of individual schools.

Despite the multiplicity of forms and implementation processes involved in teacher evaluation, Robertson (2003) documents, from the 1980s onwards, a growing convergence in accountability debates related to increased demand for assurances of quality instruction and educational outcomes in policy circles across many Anglophone countries, mainly Australia, Canada, the U.K., New Zealand and the U.S. Robertson (*ibid.*) draws parallels with the impact of this debate on practices in international schools. Drawing on Brown et al. (1997), he attributes this high level of policy convergence to neo-liberal, free-market economic policies of the New Right governments of Ronald Reagan in the U.S. and Margaret Thatcher in the U.K. during the 1980s. Government demands for an end to a perceived crisis of overspending and inefficiency in social and educational programs, charges of an unresponsive bureaucracy and accusations of a growing welfare state led to demands for educational reform. Schools and school curricula were tasked with becoming more organizationally flexible and accountable, for producing the workforce believed needed to compete in rapidly globalizing economies (*ibid.* 2003). As more and more manual and service-related industries took advantage of relocating or outsourcing production processes and services to markets with lower labour costs, education became increasingly tasked with providing the technically and scientifically skilled workforce it appeared would be needed to compete in global markets where ‘knowledge-based’ industries were endorsed as the means to secure economic advantage. Governments came to view education as a way to achieve and support national development aspirations. Accountability mechanisms, of which teacher evaluation processes were but one, were introduced to counteract the discerned closed curricula thought to be too heavily influenced by teacher input and lacking in consultation from the business community, parents and governors (Robertson, 2003). In addition, citing the work of Downey, von Hippel & Becket (2004), Robertson highlights that students from lower socio-economic backgrounds seemed to be dependent on their

teachers for academic success. This reasoning also increased policy makers' determination to improve the quality of teachers and teaching.

In the 1990s, social democratic governments like those of Bill Clinton in the U.S. and Tony Blair's New Labour government in the U.K. continued this trend for reforming education. Efforts to raise educational standards were sought primarily from the field of business management. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) in the U.S. gave rise to a dramatic growth in the use of standardized testing. Government funding to school districts was dependent on students meeting proficiency targets on annual assessments. Johnson (2012, p.119) documents the "explicit sentiment behind NCLB: no matter what the background characteristics of students or when they entered a particular school, all were expected to demonstrate competence in grade-level appropriate material." A policy of 'no excuses' for student failure was handed down to schools and the teaching profession was charged with accounting for student learning in quantifiable ways. In the U.K., the use of league tables emerged. Assessment of student learning at designated key stages of educational provision was introduced and results were used to compare and rank-order the schools' ability to impact student achievement. What was not taken into account when comparing schools was the diversity of student intake between schools, the variety of socio-economic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds or the proportion of students with special educational needs. The social policies put forward by New Right governments to make schools more responsive to the needs of all stakeholders have been criticized for instead producing a hierarchy of schools catering to market forces. Commentary also documents claims that these policies in fact resulted in a more centralized system of accountability with greater power given to the Office for Standards in Education, (OFSTEAD), Teacher Training Agency (TTA) and the Curriculum Authority (QCA) and away from the teaching profession (Robertson, 2003). Accountability, student attainment targets and priority areas for improvement, usually literacy, numeracy, science and/or technology goals, came to be externally determined and imposed by government dictate. Schools to a far lesser degree, then, determined improvement efforts.

### **2.3 External accountability of the teaching profession**

Of particular interest is the work of Poulson (1996) who demonstrates how this concept of a need for external accountability of teachers and of educational provision outside the realm of the teaching profession, became legitimized and a 'taken-for-granted' norm within society. Common government discourse and the use of keywords such as client,

stakeholders, standards, and accountability in relation to education, reinforced by growing media coverage, helped construct among the larger society, an image of teachers and schools as being in need of external regulation. Robertson (2003, pg. 282), based on the work of Poulson (1996) attests that this “change was influenced by social, historical and political considerations, by biases of emerging perspectives and interests, and perhaps, above all, the constellations of power.” Robertson also documents how, while there was significant policy convergence across countries in relation to accountability measures, uptake in the U.K. was perhaps more centralized than in the U.S. where the federal government dispenses implementation measures to individual states, some of which supported more liberal approaches to education than others. Efforts to introduce greater educational accountability measures for teachers in New Zealand suffered greater resistance. Teaching unions responded to calls for improved teaching quality with demand for greater funding and provisions for teachers’ continuing professional development. At an international level, organizations like the OCED endorsed these policies for educational reform and the introduction of external accountability of teachers. (Robertson, 2003, OECD, 2009, 2013)

In 2009, in an effort to spur innovation and reform in U.S. education and address concerns about the relatively low ranking of U.S. students in reading, mathematics and science performance in the Program for International Assessment (Pisa) studies compared to major Asian and some European economies, President Obama’s government launched a 4.35 billion dollar education initiative, Race to the Top (RTT) for K-12 education. Johnson (2012, p. 113) documents that “a strategy for improving schools by assessing the effectiveness of individual teachers gained rapid acceptance.” To compete for federal funding, school districts were required to implement “rigorous, transparent and fair” evaluations systems for teachers that use multiple ratings of teacher effectiveness and take into account data on student growth as a significant factor in evaluating teacher performance (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2010). Growing dissatisfaction in the U.S. with the No Child Left Behind policy’s focus on status results (the percentage of students reaching required grade-level targets) as opposed to growth measures of student learning contributed to this impetus for the Race to the Top (Marzano 2013). Status scores based on standardized tests provided little information teachers could use to plan more effective instruction. Marzano (ibid.) argues that information on teacher effectiveness in curriculum areas and in relation to the success of instructional strategies are needed if we are to design evaluation systems to help teachers improve their pedagogical skills. He asserts that two of the major challenges currently being experienced in relation to teacher evaluation processes in the U.S. relate

to the inclusion and use of measures of student growth as indicators of teacher effectiveness (ibid.) and the need for greater rigor in measuring teachers' pedagogy.

## **2.4 Teacher evaluation within the context of international schools**

Many international schools operate outside the policy frameworks and legal requirements of national appraisal systems. Most, seek external accreditation by international bodies such as the Council of International Schools or its American counterparts, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges or the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. In what is fast becoming a global market for education, such accreditation is thought to increase schools' competitive advantage and marketability, as it represents to the schools' stakeholders that they reach and maintain standards for international education. These schools are not exempt from the influence of external accountability mechanisms from outside their walls. To maintain accredited status, schools must accede to a reaccreditation process every ten years, an interim visit and report at the 5-year mark and submit annual progress reports responding to recommendations made by the accrediting bodies. While schools that embark on accreditation are evaluated in areas in line with their own guiding statements, and the process is presented primarily as a self-study, schools are nonetheless evaluated against standards decreed by these external bodies. Thus accreditation can be revoked or special measures put in place for limited periods if standards are not met.

Many schools also offer some form of internationally recognized international curriculum such as the International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Curriculum (IB PYP), or the International Primary Years Curriculum (IPC) to meet the expectations of globally mobile business or diplomatic ex-pat families and from local populations attending these schools, for guarantees of internationally recognized standards of education. The administration of external standardized tests is also not uncommon in international schools. A criticism of a growing trend of parents seeking competitive positional advantage and elitist credentials is fast becoming associated with these schools (Lowe, 2000). As many international schools operate outside the framework of national teacher appraisal systems they are often in the position of 'reinventing the wheel' in terms of needing to create teacher evaluation tools and systems themselves. Accreditation bodies do not provide schools with tools or systems to evaluate teachers' implementation of expected standards and practices. This lack of an existent system from the school's accrediting bodies together with challenges (See 1.2) I experienced implementing the school's previous approach motivated my interest in developing a

system which could promote teacher development, support improvements in pedagogy and impact student learning.

Little has been written about teacher appraisal in international schools, personal experience suggests however while evaluation systems vary they largely mirror practices found in national and private fee-paying contexts across the globe.

## **2.5 A dual purpose for teacher evaluation systems**

Traditionally, teacher evaluation systems have functioned as measurement tools aimed at addressing teacher performance. Current educational discourse in the field of teacher evaluation, however, highlights a dual summative and formative purpose for teacher evaluation (e.g. see Papay, 2012, Johnson, 2012, Danielson 2008, 2011, 2013, Marshall, 2013, Marzano 2007 and 2013). In their summative form, evaluations are designed to provide summary statements of a teacher's current practices and performance capabilities relative to what are considered as standards or measures of 'good' teaching. Summative evaluation of teaching seeks to observe teachers performing their best to enhance student learning, confirm that pedagogical practices, directed towards student achievement, are improving student outcomes and check that required standards are being met (OECD, 2013, p. 6). The OECD contends that summative evaluation is an indispensable source of documentation to hold teachers accountable for their professionalism and a necessary quality assurance mechanism for good teaching. In contrast, formative assessment of teachers practice aims to identify and then provide support and/or training for those areas of teachers' pedagogy and/or subject knowledge where improvements can be made to impact student engagement, achievement and progress positively (e.g. see Marzano 2013, Danielson, 2013). The latter aim reflects the focus of this study.

### **2.5.1 Summative teacher evaluations**

The OECD (2013, p 14) contends that summative assessments also, "in relation to specific criteria make comparisons possible", and can be used for hiring and tenure decisions, for promotion opportunities or in the case of ineffective teachers, for decisions regarding termination. In contexts where there are concerns about the status and image of teaching, where teachers' may feel that their work is undervalued, the OECD attests, evaluation can be used as a basis for recognizing teachers' work. "Evaluation provides opportunities to recognize and reward teaching competence and performance, which is essential to retain effective teachers in schools as well as to make teaching an attractive

career choice” (OECD, 2013, p 6). More recently, teacher evaluations have been linked to performance-based pay designed to reward teachers for increasing student achievement (OECD, 2013, Johnson, 2012, Darling Hammond et al. 2012). This however, has proven rather contentious on a number of levels; based on the concept that teachers will improve their practice for financial reward this initiative, ignores the fact that many individuals choose teaching for its intrinsic rewards. Introducing individualized merit awards into what have been traditionally flat teacher pay scales also runs the risk of dividing the profession and focusing improvement efforts in individual classrooms rather than at the school level (Johnson, 2012).

### **2.5.2 Formative teacher evaluation**

While developing valid and reliable evaluation systems to assess teacher performance effectively is important, Papay (2012 p. 124) attests, “recent debate by policy makers and efforts by researchers has focused much too narrowly on this summative measurement purpose of teacher evaluation.” He highlights the need to refocus attention on a much broader conception of the purpose of teacher evaluation: as a mechanism to drive continual instructional improvement. Evaluations carried out with this intent, he contends, hold greater promise of a far more extensive systematic impact on student learning than purely summative measures of teacher performance. Papay’s view mirrors a growing interest in educational circles in the potential for teacher evaluation processes to function as a mechanism to drive continuing teacher professional growth and development, improve teaching and ultimately positively impact student learning (Papay, 2012, Bryk, Harding & Greenberg, 2012, Darling-Hammond, Amrein Beardsley, Haertel & Rothstein, 2012, OECD 2009, 2013). This approach to teacher evaluation is qualitatively different, and is essentially formative in scope and principle. This inquiry adopts the definition of formative evaluation provided by Isore (OECD, 2009, p. 7): “the process by which evaluators give constructive feedback to the teacher, pointing out at what level the teacher is performing on each of the relevant criteria, and suggesting ways to enhance practice.” The purpose of teacher appraisal, when conducted for formative means, is to appraise current teacher practice to identify strengths and weaknesses and provide adequate professional development opportunities for areas in need of improvement (OECD 2009, p. 6). Formative assessment advances the prospects of assessment *for* teaching, in contrast to summative assessment, which strives to make performance decisions based on an assessment *of* teaching. A function of continuous professional growth, career long professional development opportunities and professional learning, is linked to this view of formative assessment of teacher capabilities (OECD 2009, p. 9). The potential value



and benefits of formative assessment of teachers' practice to support improvements in pedagogy and impact student learning in the research literature previously mentioned, lead to my interest in the formative function of teacher appraisal and formed the theoretical underpinnings for the current study.

The previous discussion however provides a relatively straightforward description of the aims and objectives of both summative and formative teacher evaluation processes. This may, contribute to the view, held in some policy circles and school administrative contexts, that these evaluations are relatively straightforward to administer and the realization of summative and formative aims and objectives is easily attainable. In reality, at policy and research levels, in addition to practical implementation of appraisal systems in schools, teacher evaluation has always been, and currently remains a highly controversial subject.

## **2.6 Growing dissatisfaction with teacher evaluation systems**

The ensuing discussion aims to outline some of the issues, oftentimes considered contentious, involved in implementing effective appraisal systems. Of particular focus is appraisal linked to continuing professional development within the context of one international school. Consideration is given to the design of evaluation processes, particularly the standards and indicators used as benchmarks of effective teaching practices. Implementation processes, including the use of data gathering instruments, are also discussed. How student achievement data relates to continuing professional development is specifically explored.

There is widespread agreement among quantitative educational researchers that teachers are the single most important school-level factor impacting student learning and achievement (Aaronson, Barrow & Sander, 2007; McCaffrey Lockwood, Koretz, Lockwood & Hamilton, 2003). If we accept that agreement and Papay's (2012, p. 125) contention that there is a wide variation in teachers' abilities ("not all teachers are equally effective") it seems worth exploring the circumstances under which teacher evaluation might more effectively function as part of a process to promote and support continuing teacher development and advance student learning.

Marzano (2013) who has been involved in the design and implementation of many U.S. district and state evaluation systems, reports that research evidence on teacher appraisal systems' failure to impact teachers' pedagogical skills and enhance student

learning began emerging in the 1980s. A study conducted by Wise, Darling-Hammond, McLaughlin & Bernstein (1984) concluded that “narrative evaluation provided insufficient information about the standards and criteria against which teachers were evaluated”, teachers were not provided with sufficient information to identify the areas where improvement was needed or with strategies or structures to support improvement, and deemed evaluation as not specific enough to increase teachers’ pedagogical skills (ibid.). Subsequent studies, critique and commentary by Glatthorn, (1987); Gilckman (1985) added to the legitimacy of concerns about then-common processes for teacher evaluation. Despite the intervening years and advances in evaluative tools and processes, dissatisfaction with the capacity of evaluative systems to improve pedagogy and impact student achievement continues to exist in many educational contexts.

Marzano & Toth (2013) highlight two significant reports on teacher evaluation; *Rush to Judgment* (Toth & Rothman, 2008) and *The Widget Effect* (Weisberg et al. 2009). Despite over 10% of the 600 schools in the Chicago school system being rated as educationally failing, 87% gave no unsatisfactory ratings to any teachers. Only 0.3% of all teachers were rated as “unsatisfactory” and 93% of the city’s 25,000 teachers received excellent or superior ratings (Toth & Rothman, 2008). Similarly, Weisberg et al. (2009) found that in a district of 34,899 tenured teachers, 67.75 per cent received the highest ratings, and only 0.4% received the lowest rating. Research by Donaldson (2007), also in the U.S., found that less than one per cent of teachers were rated as unsatisfactory. As a consequence, despite administrators’ and colleagues’ recognition that some teachers are unsatisfactory, almost no teachers are dismissed. Research by the National Council on Teacher Quality in the US (2010) illustrates that only half of all tenured teachers in the Boston Public Schools had been evaluated in the previous two years. Subsequent studies by Stronge, (2011) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (2012) provided additional summaries of the failings of teacher evaluation systems.

Work by Toth & Rochman, 2008, (also cited in Papay 2012) provides insight into the evaluative processes these studies examined and presents reasons for the inadequacies. Many of the evaluations that do occur consist of so-called ‘drive-by’ observations in which a principal stops in a classroom for a brief visit and indicates whether the teacher is satisfactory or unsatisfactory based on a basic checklist of practices. An additional phenomenon often referred to as the ‘dog and pony’ show characterizes many evaluation visits. Here, principals observe pre-scheduled, highly planned, closely narrated lessons, that are arguably inconsistent with regular practice.

Data from the OECD *Teaching and Learning International Survey* (TALIS, 2007/2008), indicates that 22% of teachers had never received any appraisal or feedback from their principal, while 28.6% had never received any feedback or appraisal of their work in the school from other teachers or the school management team.

From a practitioner perspective, work by Weisberg et al. (2009) in the U.S. highlights that very few teachers report receiving meaningful evaluative feedback, with instances of no feedback at all being not uncommon. In such systems, not only do administrators and policy makers gain no real information about teacher effectiveness, teachers are also denied the opportunity for any meaningful feedback to help them improve instructional practices (Papay, 2012). Evaluative instances such as these have been described as a meaningless exercises stemming from required bureaucratic rituals in schools, endured by both teachers and evaluators alike (Holland, 2005; Marshall, 2005).

In contrast, research by Taylor & Tyler (2011) suggests that teachers can and do improve with specific and meaningful feedback. A rigorous evaluation program does boost teacher effectiveness and student achievement. In addition, in representative samples of teachers across OECD countries (2009), 83.2% of teachers who received appraisal and feedback reported largely positive views and found the processes to be generally reflective of a fair assessment of their work. 78.6% of participants found the assessments helpful in developing their work as teachers. Teacher reports of positive feedback on appraisal are also subsequently reported in the OECD TALIS Report (2013).

Unfortunately, however, there is still a growing consensus on the need for continued teacher evaluation reform. Darling-Hammond et al. (2012), in claims closely echoed by Bryk, Harding & Greenberg (2012) and Papay (2012) argue that evidence from practitioners, researchers and policy makers suggests that many current teacher evaluation systems do little to help teachers improve and have limited impact on student learning. Papay (2012, p. 123) maintains that, "teacher evaluation in the United States is broken and needs fixing." Empirical evidence, Papay suggests, reflects a still not-uncommon reality where few teachers are regularly evaluated, many evaluations are cursory in nature, few teachers are identified as unsatisfactory and nearly all succeed.

## **2.7 Efforts at reforming teacher evaluation systems – Standards based evaluations**

If evaluation systems are to change so as to provide valid and reliable assessments of teachers' instructional strengths and weakness, highlight areas for improvement and function as formative professional development tools, the criteria necessary to evaluate teachers relative to what is considered 'effective' teaching must be determined and defined. Concerns about the effectiveness of some current evaluative processes (Marshall 2013, Danielson, 2013, Marzano & Toth, 2013) and growing demand from practitioners, policy-makers and researchers to identify better approaches and more effective evaluative systems resulted in two major contemporary developments in teacher evaluation reform: standards-based evaluations and value-added measures. The use of these two approaches as tools for continuing teacher professional development will now be discussed.

Standards-based evaluations have grown from a movement to establish a reliable definition and set of teaching competences and responsibilities that teachers should exhibit in the execution of their profession (Papay, 2012, Danielson, 2013). Although based on the traditional model of teacher observations, standards-based evaluations go beyond simple classroom observations and incorporate a transparent set of instructional standards and accompanying rubrics that define and explain specific levels of performance for each teaching standard (Papay, 2012, Danielson 2013, Marzano 2013, OECD, 2009). When implemented as developers planned, trained evaluators observe individual teachers several times a year, scripting lessons and matching observed evidence to standards and indicators of practice on the levelled rubric. Teacher self-reflections and professional dialogue with evaluators pre-and post-observations are often included as part of the evaluation cycle. In the end, evaluators should then have a complete summative assessment that provides detailed information about a comprehensive set of classroom practices (Kane, Taylor, Tyler and Wooten, 2011, Marzano 2013).

These standard-based protocols (Papay, 2012, Darling-Hammond, 2012) offer several potential advantages as professional development tools. Teachers gain more meaningful feedback based on clear standards rather than evaluators' subjective judgments, thereby being able to identify how their instructional practices meet or fall short of the standards. Evaluators must also justify assessments with evidence collected during observations. The insights gained from this exercise can provide the basis for on-going professional conversations and subsequent professional development plans and

goal setting. The research literature mentioned above, particularly the perspectives of Darling Hammond (2012, 2013), Papay (2012) and reports by the OECD (2013) in the field of standards-based evaluations fuelled my interest in standards based assessments and provided the theoretical concepts and resources that supported the development of the appraisal tool within this study.

Two comprehensive standards-based frameworks, namely, the Danielson Framework for Teaching (2007, 2013) and the Marzano Teacher Evaluation Model (2007, 2013) represent significant contributions to this drive to identify and define what Danielson describes teachers 'should know and be able to do' (Danielson, 2013). A significant number of U.S. districts have adopted or developed customized criteria based on these frameworks. Furthermore, the National Professional Standards for Teachers, with corresponding criteria, indicators and rubrics related to more specific national situations have been developed by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards in the U.S. (1989) and the Departments of Education of Australia (2011) and the U.K. (2012). The province of Quebec, Canada, and Chile's teacher evaluation process are also largely reflective of Danielson's framework (OECD, 2012). These frameworks and professional standards represent efforts to identify those aspects of teachers' practice that have been documented through empirical studies and theoretical research as promoting effective instruction and improved student learning (Danielson, 2013).

Danielson's framework groups teachers' responsibilities into four major domains of practice comprising twenty-one components: planning and preparation (6 components), the classroom environment (5 components), instruction (5 components) and professional responsibilities (5 components). Each component also addresses 3 to 5 subsequent individual elements. Marzano's newest Teacher Evaluation Model is now similarly organized into the following four domains: classroom strategies and behaviours (41 elements), planning and preparing (8 elements), reflecting on teaching (5 elements), collegiality and professionalism (5 elements). Marzano's four domains contain 59 different elements, which the researcher argues intertwine and build on each other to support teacher improvement. Marzano asserts that unlike other evaluation models, his framework focuses on those classroom strategies shown through research to have direct causal links with student attainment (Marzano, 2013). A recent PhD study by Mielke (2012) in the U.S. draws a comparison between Marzano's & Danielson's models and concludes Marzano's model is more effective in providing greater detail to guide classroom instruction. As this is a small-scale empirical study, further studies are needed to confirm these research findings.

Each model is designed to address both the summative and formative purposes of teacher appraisal. They provide frameworks for evaluating teacher performance, while simultaneously functioning as tools that can be used for teacher self-assessment. They offer observational protocols for classroom walk-throughs, impromptu and formal observations connected to formative assessments of teaching practice. Both frameworks are based on a developmental continuum of four increasingly sophisticated levels of teaching performance: unsatisfactory, basic, proficient and distinguished. The levels provide a useful focus to support the systematic development of deliberate teacher practice and expertise and a focal point for professional discussions and improvement efforts. Danielson (2008, p. 33) affirms her framework as a “road-map to guide novice teachers through initial classroom experiences, a structure to help experienced professionals become more effective, and a means to focus improvement efforts”, adding that her framework can be used to support mentoring and coaching relationships.

While Kleinhenz and Ingvarson (2004) claim that it is “now widely accepted that comprehensive, congruent, domain specific standards provide the only credible basis for making useful judgments of teacher competence,” standards-based assessments are not without their critics. Papay (2012) points out that since these evaluations rely on a methodology of classroom observations, they are still, in some circles, seen as subjective, biased and judged as unable to provide objective assessments of classroom practice. Teachers also may argue that results are unfair, being based on the subjective perspectives of the evaluators. Papay (2012) also concedes that underlying prior opinions and knowledge of teacher contributions may make it difficult to make fair and reliable judgments of their instructional practice. While not possible to eliminate all bias, standards-based evaluations offer advantages over traditional classroom observations (Fiarman, Honshon, Munger, Papay & Qazilbash (2010, p. 14).

Implementing standards-based evaluations is not without its challenges. In relation to the intrinsic number of practices and indicators of success they encompass, it has been my experience that during educational leadership workshops the frameworks have been described by principals as either unwieldy, complex, time intensive or complicated to administer. Danielson, (2013) cautions against the potential misuse of her framework, although components are generic and designed to apply to any teaching situation, she recognizes that their actual manifestations will differ in various contexts. Evaluators need to examine their application as well as translate the elements into specific,

observable examples for their own particular contexts. Papay (2012, p.135) similarly notes that although several well-crafted evaluation standards and rubrics are now in the educational domain, “they are not a one-size fits all approach” and advocates practitioners to “adapt these existing models to local context and work carefully...to develop understanding, buy-in and trust.”

Marzano (2013) in contrast, while acknowledging that criticisms of too many strategies and competencies have been directed towards his model argues that ratings are needed in all competencies of his model if teachers are to systematically direct their improvement efforts at areas in need of improvement. He contrasts his model with Strong’s (2011) Rapid Assessment of Teacher Effectiveness (RATE), which he contends was designed explicitly with measurement as its purpose and which includes just 10 categories of classroom strategies and behaviours. He argues models such as these often omit key and important competencies but does however concede that if his model is required for summative purposes only 15 elements of his framework can be used. Marzano’s model appears more prescriptive in both its definition of effective teaching practices and its implementation. Whether the numbers of fine-grained descriptors ultimately make it too unwieldy and burdensome and its implementation proves so time-consuming that it fails to sustainably and systematically support improved pedagogy remains open for future research. Mielke’s (2012) PhD study supports Marzano’s assertion.

Implementation challenges have been addressed in some contexts by adopting a tiered approach to evaluations with not all teachers being evaluated each year and/or schools distributing evaluations among teachers with posts of responsibility. These modifications require intensive professional development to ensure evaluators calibrate ratings similarly (Johnson, 2012, Kane et al., 2011). Evaluators need to be well-trained, knowledgeable about effective instruction, able to analyse observed practices against standards and identify the degree of effectiveness displayed. Not all principals have this type of training. Johnson (2012) found key limiting factors in evaluative processes to be principals’ unwillingness to identify teachers not meeting standards, their reluctance or inability to provide tough assessments and lack of expertise in separating judgments about practice from their personal knowledge of the teacher. These researchers identified the following indicators of success for standards-based evaluations to function effectively as professional development tools: evaluators’ expertise in providing, rich, meaningful actionable feedback to teachers, time to do the work well, and help in supporting teachers make sense of ratings. Ultimately it appears to come down to

having strong structures to support teachers in using their evaluation results to inform and improve instruction. Researchers argue that simply adopting standards and protocols does not change practice.

## **2.8 Efforts to reform teacher evaluation systems – Value-Added Models**

Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) argue there is growing consensus that evidence of teacher contributions to student learning becomes part of evaluations. One such attempt to incorporate the use of student learning into teacher evaluation is the use of value-added models. Statistical methods are applied to evaluate yearly gains in student test scores on standardized tests with the aim of providing estimates of individual teachers' effectiveness in raising student achievement (Darling Hammond et al. 2012). Papay (2012) contends that the expansion of standardized testing and the development of comprehensive, longitudinal datasets have expedited the development and use of such methods.

Using value-added measures however, for individual teacher evaluations, is based on the belief that measured achievement for a specific teacher's students reflects that teacher's effectiveness (Darling Hammond et al. 2012). These researchers contend that this belief is based on the questionable presumption that growth in student learning can be measured by a yearly, standardized test and is influenced by one individual teacher alone. They note that such testing inadequately accounts for the influence of factors like class size, instructional time, availability of specialists and tutors, home and community support and challenges, individual student needs and abilities, health, attendance, and prior teachers. All of these variables impact student learning and achievement. Even with some means of controlling for student-level demographic effects on some of the factors, value-added ratings cannot extrapolate all the many influences on student progress and achievement. Both Papay (2012) and Darling Hammond et al. (2012) acknowledge that despite growing sophistication and efforts in statistical control to discount and analyse out the portion of student gains due to other factors, value-added modelling is problematic for making evaluative decisions and is not appropriate as a primary measure for evaluating individual teachers. In addition Darling-Hammond et al. (2012) illustrate a number of additional documented problems with using value-added methods as accurate measures of teacher effectiveness. These include difficulties such as students assigned to teachers affect scores; statistical models not being able to fully adjust for some teachers having a disproportionate number of students with greater challenges; and trouble assessing students whose scores on traditional tests may not



accurately reflect learning gains. Rated effectiveness also depends on whether tests emphasize skills and areas of the curriculum for which the teacher is relatively more or relatively less effective, and gains may be influenced by how much teachers emphasize test preparation. Teachers whose students do best on standardized tests are not always effective at promoting longer-term gains (Darling Hammond et al. 2012). Teachers' value-added scores have also been found to differ significantly when different tests are used even within the same content areas (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2012), and results can also vary significantly when different statistical methods are used (Darling-Hammond, 2013). In regard to the effectiveness of value-added models as professional development tools, Darling Hammond et al. (2012) indicate that teachers find it difficult to interpret a summative teacher effectiveness rating and correlate its effect on their instructional practices. This concern is mirrored by Papay (2012, p.128, who observes that "simply receiving an evaluation score, does not tell teachers how to improve." On a practical level, standardized tests are usually confined to English language and Mathematics with students in grades 4-8, which further restricts their application as professional development tools for a large number of teachers. Papay (2012) does, however, contend that these methods hold untapped potential to impact practice. Some U.S. districts, he highlights, can disaggregate student data and could provide teachers with more accurate information about their effectiveness on certain types of test questions or with certain types of students. This data could be used to help target instruction. Recognition of these limitations however, has led for calls to use test-score data as only one of multiple measures of teacher effectiveness (Papay, 2012).

One problem with applying value-added models to continuing teacher professional development links to student learning in many international schools. In many of these schools, the standardized tests administered are not explicitly tied to the curricula taught. There is no standardized assessment available for the IB PYP as individual schools largely determine the specific content in subject scope and sequence documents. Standardized tests are conducted in the school where the study was undertaken to compare student attainment and growth with norm-referenced achievements of students in similar age ranges, but tests are not tied to the school's curriculum. Therefore, the use of standardized test scores to account for teacher impact on student learning or to indicate areas where professional development might strengthen student learning was not feasible. Additionally, few international schools have the resources or manpower to disaggregate data from standardized tests for teachers to use in adapting their instructional practices. Consequently, my study focused on using student learning linked to classrooms practice to evaluate teachers'

contributions to learning and to identify areas where professional development initiatives might be applied to strengthen instruction.

A growing focus on test-based accountability measures has however made value-added models attractive to policy makers. Unlike standard-based observations that focus primarily on teacher input and interactions between students and teachers and can be deemed subjective since they are dependent on evaluators' judgment, value-added models (VAMs) are appealing as they "explicitly focus on educational outputs" (Papay, 2012, p. 124), meaning summative scores of student learning. Based on external assessments and quantitative in nature, they are seen as objective, inexpensive, and fairly easy to administer. Papay (ibid. 125) acknowledges that while the range of challenges and assumptions associated with value-added models "have been widely discussed in value-added literature, they have not been fully acknowledged in the policy community" and asserts, "claims that value-added models can isolate a teacher's contribution to student learning are too strong."

Darling Hammond et al. (2012) highlights that value-added models have proven helpful in teacher evaluation when applied for measuring the effects of specific programs and interventions. Insights from these large-scale studies have contributed to the body of research knowledge linked to identifying specific teaching practices that influence student learning gains and have been incorporated into professional standards for teaching; using value-added methods in research can help validate measures that are productive for teacher evaluation. Papay (2012, p. 126) posits that the "largest contribution of the value-added movement has been to focus attention on teacher effectiveness and raise serious questions about the status quo."

### **2.8.1 Multiple measures of student growth within Value Added Models**

The need to include evidence of student learning and growth in teacher appraisal is argued by researchers prominent in this field such as Marzano and Toth (2013), and Darling-Hammond (2013), however the arguments and evidence put forward by these researchers in support of this claim differ considerably. For Marzano and Toth (2013), the question is not about whether to attribute student-learning gains to individual teachers. That is taken as a given. They assert that if students are not exhibiting growth in a specific teacher's classroom, that particular teacher is ineffective. Acknowledging and referencing concerns expressed by Darling Hammond et al. (2012) discussed earlier, they also seem to discount measurement experts' caution about the limitations of using value-added measures as a reflection of individual teacher's contributions to

learning. Rather they assert that modern statistical tools hold a promising direction for reform and argue claims that value-added measures are unreliable should be rejected. What is of consideration to these researchers is determining ways to increase the validity and reliability of ways to measure student growth. In this regard they concede that value-added measures should be supplement with assessments linked to classroom learning and scores aggregated. Suggested strategies put forward include the combined use of periodic benchmark assessments, common assessments to measure content taught in relatively short intervals, scores from rubrics and end-of-year tests. Both Marzano and Toth (2013) and Darling-Hammond (2013) illustrate how the use of student learning goals can be incorporated into teacher evaluations. Teachers either determine goals based on initial evidence and curriculum standards or jointly establish goals with students. Subsequent student progress is monitored and the percentage of students who met their goals is considered the student growth index for the class and attributed to teacher influence. The use of such strategies mentioned earlier would also enable evaluators take into account student gains in subjects and age ranges usually not assessed using standardized tests. Incorporating evidence of student learning is a popular idea with policymakers and an explicit part of legislation in the U.S. and of teacher evaluation processes in the U.K.

In contrast Darling-Hammond (2012, 2013) accentuates formative over summative evaluation objectives and asserts that while it is important to 'look at student learning in connection to teaching in the course of the evaluation process there are many ways to do this (2013, p. 65). Using pragmatic examples from U.S. districts she cites the benefits of using classroom based assessments such as learning continuums, collaboratively created pre-and post tests, student self-assessments, portfolios and goal setting in conjunction with evidence from standard-based classroom observations. Darling-Hammond (2013, p. 98) stresses, "the critical importance of the teachers' ownership over compiling data and their use of formative student assessments to examine, interpret and inform improvements in learning." Darling-Hammond connects student learning to teachers' on-going professional learning when she asserts (ibid. p. 65) teachers need to "gain the knowledge and skills to respond to evidence of student learning in ever-more-effective ways."

This literature review led me to an understanding of the wide variety of views associated with the use of evidence of student achievement and growth in teacher appraisals. In relation to the study, it led to the generation and inclusion of a list of possible sources of

evidence (Appendix C) that could be used by teachers to support ratings of practice in teaching standards linked to their appraisals.

## **2.9 Teacher evaluation systems – where to next?**

### **Current recommendations from research in the field of teacher evaluation**

Danielson's framework has been in existence for the last 18 years. Her efforts to respond to continued developmental requests have led to three edited revisions (1996, 2007, 2013). Similarly, the Marzano framework has been circulating in educational circles since 2007 with an updated edition appearing in 2014. Even so, research reports compiled at the culmination of the OECD's Third International Summit on the Teaching Profession (Amsterdam, March 2013) define "teacher-appraisal systems as still a work-in-progress in most countries" (OECD, 2013, p. 11). The report illustrates that much work is still to be done in terms of how teacher quality is defined, what standards are set and by whom, and putting effective systems in place for implementation. The Harvard Symposium on teacher effectiveness (2013) similarly suggested that successfully implementing teacher appraisal as a tool to lever teacher development and impact student learning faces significant challenges. However, the view is beginning to emerge that teacher appraisal can, given the right circumstances and context, function as an effective mechanism to "increase the focus on teaching quality and continuous professional development" (OECD, 2013, p. 9). At the same time there is agreement that for this potential to become a reality, current evaluation practices in many educational contexts must improve. For Marzano & Toth (2013) two primary causes lie at the root of ineffective appraisal systems: overinflated teacher effectiveness scores and the lack of inclusion of student work in evaluations.

## **2.10 The problem of overinflated teacher effectiveness scores**

Marzano & Toth (2013, p. 53) concede the "real potential of classroom observations is their usefulness for the diagnosis and development of instructional practices." They argue however that errors caused by too few observations, observations not reflecting teachers' typical behaviour and evaluators inaccurately identifying the type and level of strategies being used are the cause of errors which weaken the reliability of observations and harm their potential to drive instructional improvement. To counteract what they term overinflated teacher effectiveness scores suggestions put forward by these researchers include unannounced observations, observation of specific types of lesson segments, video recording with analysis and walk-throughs to build up a profile of

teachers' capabilities and to identify areas for possible development. Teachers could also be asked to provide video evidence and or/artefacts for specific strategies. The researchers illustrate this approach with an example of how this might apply to for example, teachers' managing student responses. Teachers could provide video evidence of their use of questioning and how they help bring about student response.

Other intensive measures they document to alleviate the perceived need for increased reliability in the quality of observations include building observer capacity through multiple ratters and having systems in place to examine and continually analyse and audit observation scores. In addition, and perhaps more contentious, are proposals regarding the use and teacher tests of pedagogical knowledge. Researchers suggest that tests in the form of multiple choice and short constructed responses to questions about specific instructional strategies be combined to form a score that represents a teacher's overall strengths and weaknesses. Student surveys about teacher effectiveness are also suggested as another source of information to formally evaluate teacher practices (Marzano & Toth, 2013, Gates Foundation, 2012,). While these may be more appropriate for older students, their use by primary students is quite contentious.

Marzano & Toth assert that the inclusion of teacher self-reflection in appraisals "conveys the important message that the contextual knowledge of practitioners is respected and valued" (2013, p. 53). However, as they are also to be used to "facilitate teacher buy-in, and to establish a baseline reference point for observations" to score teacher effectiveness, a dichotomy appears to emerge of presumed respect for teacher's professionalism and contextual knowledge against a desire to score teachers as a means to improve instructional practice. The knowledge bases of most other professionals are not formally or frequently assessed by written tests during the course of their careers. The question arises if this treatment of teachers is from a desire to ensure that they have the most up-to-date pedagogical knowledge or from a desire to control and dictate the type of teaching methodologies teachers use.

What appears as increased efforts at accountability are most disconcerting for those committed to improving instructional practice through collaborative work with teachers on continual professional development in efforts to embed best practices in teaching and learning. The potential direction and influence these accountability measures may exert does not instil confidence for professionals being allowed to develop their practice in

ways the profession deems best but it does alert us to current issues and challenges in the field.

### **2.11 Building instructional capacity: an organizational perspective on teacher evaluation and teacher continuing professional development by focusing on teaching teams**

Previous discussion and research findings on efforts to improve pedagogy and positively impact student learning have focused almost exclusively at the level of the individual teacher. Johnson, (2012, p.107) illustrates that this orientation fails to take account of the wider school context in which teachers work and limits the capacity to support teachers' continuing professional development. "Although the methods for assessing individual teachers' value-added accomplishments are statistically sophisticated, they are organizationally agnostic, and therefore, insufficient" (ibid. p. 107). Johnson argues that a balanced approach is needed. It must concentrate on supporting individual teachers while deliberately focusing on teaching teams and the use of school-wide initiatives to build instructional capacity. "Some U.S. districts, along with high-achieving countries like Singapore emphasize teacher collaboration in their evaluation systems" (Darling Hammond, 2012, p. 14).

Johnson highlights research studies (Chenoweth, 2009; Ferguson, Hackman, Hanna & Ballantine, 2010; Jackson & Bruegmann, 2009; Johnson & Birkeland, 2003) that show how school cultures characterized by collaborative supportive relationships with colleagues and administrators substantially affect teachers' work experience and influence success with their students. Dissatisfaction is greater in schools where "teachers are isolated in their classrooms and resisted school-wide initiatives" (Johnson, 2012, p.108). She argues that because students move from grade to grade and subject to subject, if educational provision for students is to be improved, it must be coherent. Teacher efforts must be coordinated and they must work to build on each other's efforts. "Teams of teachers, rather than collections of teachers, build instructional capacity within a school over time" (ibid. p. 109). Specific strategies proposed to achieve this collaborative focus to enhance student learning include scheduling common planning time for teams to analyse student data, review student work and co-plan lessons (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andreo, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009). Johnson (ibid. p. 111) asserts that these research studies highlight that "Notably, across all communities, schools with better work environments for teachers also achieved greater growth in student learning." Similarly, Darling-Hammond, (citing studies by Jackson & Bruegmann,

(2009) and Goddard & Goddard, (2007) asserts that, “students have strong achievement gains when teachers work together in teams and where there is greater teacher collaboration for school improvement.” While some schools have made changes to enable teams of teachers to consistently work together on improvement efforts, Johnson (ibid. p. 111) suggests that this is not yet the norm in education and its implementation is “not easy work, nor is it work that can be done piecemeal.”

The IB PYP mandates a collaborative approach to teaching and learning within schools (IB, 2013). The current inquiry seeks to investigate how the teacher evaluation process within one international school might be utilized both at an individual and team level to support professional development in the implementation of the standards and practices of the PYP and to uncover what successes and/or challenges this might entail.

## **2.12 Professional development of educators in international schools**

In documenting the range of professional development initiatives undertaken in international schools, Hayes (2007) distinguishes between professional development provided internally within schools by and collectively with its own faculty and external provision provided either off- or on-site by external consultants. Each, she argues, has its own valuable contribution to make. The current study examines professional development opportunities within the context of appraisal in one international school. The inquiry adopts the definition of professional development proposed by Day (1999) found in Hayes (2007): “all natural learning experiences and those conscious and planned activities which are intended to be of direct or indirect benefit to the individual, group or school and which contribute, through those to the quality of education in the classroom”. Hayes regards professional development as the means by which teachers gain the knowledge, skills and emotional intelligence needed for professional practice and reflective thinking. She also contends that through professional development teachers can deepen and extend their commitment to the moral purpose of teaching.

### **Summary**

I believe this literature review in detailing the many complexities, challenges and issues associated with the field of teacher appraisal has illustrated the still current reality that, “teacher evaluation sparks discussion just about wherever and whenever it is mentioned” (OECD, 2013, p. 13). The objectives, tools and processes used to conduct teacher evaluations appear as major deciding factors in their relative effectiveness in contributing to improved pedagogy and improved student learning. Within the study, a

primary formative assessment focus using a standards-based tool and participatory process that involved teachers in their own self-assessment and on-going professional development was chosen to frame appraisals. Resulting from the literature review this appeared the best way forward to promote teachers' continuing professional development. Discussion in the next chapter details the theoretical framework used to inform implementation of this new approach to appraisals within the study.



## **Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework for the study**

### **3.1 Introduction**

As a result of my literature review my goal was to develop a standards-based appraisal tool with associated Indicators of practice that would support teachers' on-going professional learning needs and goals during appraisals. It was also important that standards and indicators address the developmental needs of the school context: incorporate recommendations from the school's two accrediting bodies (CIS/NEASC) and implementation requirements of the IB PYP. The tool also needed to comprise of a comprehensive set of teaching competencies and the process involve teachers actively in their own professional development was also important.

The tool and process developed as a result of this initiative (Appendix B) compared with the school's former model (Appendix A) represents, it is argued, a significant change in form and function of teacher appraisal within the school context. The adoption of Fullan's (2008) framework, a researcher prominent in the field of change management, alerted me to ideas and strategies that might support this change over to the new appraisal system.

This chapter outlines Fullan's theoretical framework (2008) used to inform the change process involved in implementing the new appraisal system. Fullan's work also functioned to support analysis of the empirical data on teachers' engagement with the appraisal process.

### **3.2 Benefits of theory within educational research**

Fullan (2008, p. 111) highlights the value of theory to inform action and asserts it provides educators with "the conceptual ideas and practical tools to operate in complex and unpredictable environments," allowing them consider and then make informed decisions about the ways different factors in a given situation are likely to act and interact. Additionally, according to Fullan, theory can provide a "handle on the underlying reasons, (really the underlying thinking) behind actions and their consequences" (ibid. p. 16).

### **3.3 Theories of Change**

A substantial number of diverse theoretical approaches to change within educational contexts have emerged. Beabout and Carr-Chellman (2007) provide a helpful and concise overview of a number of these change theories, illustrating that Lewin (1951) envisages change as cycles of rapid freezing and unfreezing of innovation within organizations. Abernathy and Utterback (1978, and Weick and Quinn, 1999 cited in Beabout and Carr-Chellman) draw distinctions between episodic and continuous change. Concepts of incremental and radical change also appear in the literature (Broth and Eisenhardt, 1997 cited in Beabout and Carr-Chellman). Beabout and Carr-Chellman (2007) highlight some approaches to change, focusing on responsiveness and facilitation as opposed to goal setting and motivation. Yukl (1994) describes change in terms of social influence linked to personal and physical characteristics, position and perceived possession of change agents' power within an organization. Mink et al. (1993, cited in Beabout and Carr-Chellman, 2007) draw distinctions between 'first order' change, which involves change to the more structural and operational aspects of organizations, and 'second order' change, which they regard as fundamental to alterations in practice, and involves dialogue and change in mindsets. Rogers (1995), in relation to a diffusion theory of change, suggests change involves issues of relative advantage, comparability with existing practices, the complexity involved for users together with the observability of innovation uptake. A more decentralized view of the change process which posits that the group is the proper level of analysis, is encompassed within complexity theory, system dynamics and system network approaches to change. More recently, while a number of sources including governmental policies, university research and business partnerships, and professional development initiatives arguably function as sources of change within educational contexts, a number of researchers (Fullan 2008, 2009, 2011, 2012, 2013, Hargreaves and Fullan (2012), Hattie 2012,) tend to identify the most credible source of change efforts as dependent on teachers in their day-to-day practice in classrooms. In this vein, Fullan (2001, p. 115, cited in Beabout and Carr-Chellman (2007) asserts "educational change depends on what teachers think and do – it's as simple and as complex as that."

### **3.4 Application of Fullan's Theory of Change to the research study**

Notwithstanding the multiplicity of approaches to change noted briefly earlier, Fullan's theory of change was chosen as the framework to inform the change process for implementing the new appraisal system and as a framework to advise analysis of data collected within this study for a number of reasons discussed below.

Since his seminal work related to the theory and practice of educational change, published in 1982, Michael Fullan continued to develop and refine a body of complementary, interrelated work of experientially grounded theories of change action over the next three decades (for examples, see, 2008, 2009, 2011, 2013). Fullan initially proposed a framework consisting of five interrelated components linked to successful change efforts focusing on moral purpose, understanding change, relationship building, knowledge creation and sharing and coherence making. While his work is linked with the concept of tri-level reform, (change at the school, district and state/national level), it can be argued that it is also a particularly pragmatic framework for working on smaller, school level change within this study. Although Fullan's body of work contains numerous nuanced structures and options to frame change, six interrelated aspects, outlined and developed in his publication, *The Six Secrets of Change* (2008), have been chosen to frame and analyse efforts in this study. These are aimed at changing the focus of the appraisal system from accountability to a more professional learning and development model. This framework is seen as an appropriate theory as it identifies and provides insights and ideas about possible influential components and conditions influencing the change process. The use of these strategies within efforts to improve the appraisal system should be of help in supporting and examining teachers' engagement with the new process. The six elements, outlined below, which Fullan (2008, p. 5) describes as exceptionally "actionable," should allow me to approach change with greater confidence and functioned as a theory of action facilitating "travel to a better state of being and functioning;" (ibid. p. 5) the ultimate goal of teacher appraisal.

Fullan's work is also grounded in public and private educational change efforts and contexts around the world, most notably Canada, England, Australia, Chile, Hong Kong, New Zealand, the Netherlands, and Scandinavia (ibid. p. ix) and as such his theories have been developed "close to the action" in comparable contexts and applied areas with teachers and leaders over the years, making the theory additionally applicable.

Fullan's framework for change focuses on the following six interrelated conditions:

- Love your Employees
- Connect Peers with Purpose
- Capacity Building Prevails
- Learning is the Work

- Transparency Rules
- Systems Learn

It is argued that there is a particular convergence between these six constructs and the objectives of the research study. Most notably, the goals of connecting peers with purpose, of building capacity, focusing on on-the job learning, and establishing transparency within teacher appraisal are salient components in efforts to realize this inquiry's research questions, which centre on:

- Achieving a focus on professional development and systematic learning within the appraisal system
- Considering how appraisal might be effectively operationalized as a professional development tool at the school level

Paying deliberate attention to the development and analysis of these constructs will also help uncover possible professional benefits and challenges that accrue during the implementation process, thereby also addressing another related research question.

Fullan (2008) claims that these strategies need to be understood both individually and in how they relate and act synergistically in combination to support change. He cautions that the elements have inherent nuances and practitioners need to grasp their deeper meaning. He also acknowledges the challenge in appreciating and acting on these in an integrated way.

### **3.5 Remaining cognizant of a caution against over-reliance on theory or action**

Notwithstanding the benefits of adopting theory to guide and analyse practice, Fullan (2008), cautions against borrowing techniques and replicating ideas decontextualized from the particular situations to which they apply. While the use of theory may help boost the likelihood of success, Fullan (ibid. p. 50) states, "none of the advice implied by the six secrets is meant to be taken literally." Use of his framework, he argues, must be accompanied by reflective insight, an analytic process and involve subjective judgment. It must be "applied with nuance by people immersed in a specific situation" (ibid. p. 50). His framework, he attests, can be used to cause educators to "rethink or establish your

own theory of action, worked out, so that it makes sense of what you are facing and what you want to accomplish” (ibid. p. 125).

Next, I examine the desired nature of change related to appraisal within the study. This is followed by more in-depth discussion of Fullan’s six secrets for change, how they might apply, and their implications within teacher appraisal.

### **3.6 Towards a definition and deeper understanding of the nature of possible change related to appraisal**

Change, (Fullan ibid. p. 30) quite straightforwardly articulates, involves “change in practice.” He draws a distinction between the subjective nature of change as experienced by individuals in education and what he describes as the more ‘objective meaning of change’, more formal attempts to identify the factors and processes that account for change. Fullan conceptualizes that change occurs along three dimensions:

- (1) The possible use of new or revised materials
- (2) The possible use of new approaches and
- (3) The possible alternation of beliefs (e.g., pedagogical assumptions and theories underlying particular new programs

(Fullan, 2008, p.30)

Fullan (ibid. p. 30) contends, “change has to occur in practice along the three dimensions in order for it to have a chance of affecting outcomes.” The validity of an ‘objective’ description of change, he argues (ibid. p. 20) “will indeed be whether it orders and makes sense of the confusion and complexity of educators subjective realities.”

In relation to these three dimensions of change, it was hoped, within the study, that the use of a new appraisal tool and new implementation process will result in an alternation of teachers’ beliefs linked to appraisal. The desired result is teacher acceptance and active engagement with a professional learning and development model and a move away from a predominant conceptualization of teacher appraisal as primarily driven by a need to tick boxes and a quest for compliance and accountability.

Fullan’s conceptualization of the change process along these three dimensions offers a useful framework and continuum for identifying and evaluating possible changes in teacher practice that result from using the new appraisal tool and process. It suggests

that change may occur in any or all of the dimensions, firstly, change in the use of instructional resources, materials and/or technologies by teachers, secondly, the adoption of new teaching approaches, strategies or activities, and thirdly the possible refinement or alteration in beliefs related to teaching and learning (ibid. p. 30). Complexity, however, Fullan (2008), cautions, can emerge in accomplishing actual change along any and all of these three dimensions.

The type of change being pursued is also of importance, whether faithful implementation of an already-developed innovation is the objective or what Fullan (ibid. p. 31) terms, the “mutual adaptation or evolutionary perspective”, which purports that “change often is (and should be) a result of adaptations and decisions made by users as they work.” McLaughlin (1990, cited in Beabout and Carr-Chellman 2007) likewise terms this distinction the “fidelity perspective of systematic implementation, versus the implementation perspective,” that highlights the negotiation involved in any change process.” Within the study, while the appraisal tool and structures developed were a new initiative, outright faithful adherence to implementation of the appraisal process contained in the school’s new Professional Development Performance (Appendix B) was not the goal, the objective was more in line with a mutual adaption approach where, insights and knowledge gained, in terms of what works, and the challenges involved, would prove useful to the continuing on-going refinement and improvement of a viable professional development approach to teacher appraisal.

### **3.7 Fullan’s Framework for Change**

The remainder of this chapter outlines the elements of Fullan’s framework for change and discusses how they apply and their implications for teacher appraisal within the context of the study.

#### **3.7.1 Love your Employees**

In essence, Fullan (2008) suggests change initiatives must be rooted in a deep commitment to create and support conditions for teachers to succeed, to enable teachers find meaning and satisfaction in their work. Efforts must be made to support them in achieving their own goals and increasing their skills while simultaneously addressing organizational goals. In relation to teacher appraisal, it is argued; this implies an approach based on a commitment to investing in a developmental rather than a judgmental and accountability model. Fullan (2008) asserts the need for acceptance at both cognitive and emotional levels to treat teachers and students equally. Fullan links

this to Barber and Mourshed's (2007, p. 8) assertion that "the quality of the educational system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers." Acceptance of this element of Fullan's framework, it is argued, can pose a challenge when faced with practice considered less than ideal. There is the temptation to view students as worthy of effective practice and teachers responsible for delivery, which would entail reversing to the adoption of an accountability model or even punitive judgment.

The idea of 'loving' colleagues within what most essentially probably view as a professional or collegial relationship is also perhaps a difficult classification to acquiesce to, as it seems to imply an emotive or affective approach. It might also purport to a non-judgmental acceptance of less than ideal behaviours, attitudes and practice. This is clearly not what Fullan intends.

### **3.7.2 Connect Peers with Purpose**

Fullan (ibid. p. 41) says that for change in practice to occur, strategies that foster continuous and purposeful peer interaction must be embedded. He also however, assumes this assertion in the proviso that this type of collaborative work must be rooted within what he terms a 'tight-loose' system, which is neither driven by too much accountability nor without lack of structure, which he argues would allow passivity, alienated efforts, drift and inertia to occur. Additionally, he holds that connecting peers with purpose requires a different type of leadership and structure one which provides direction and monitoring mechanisms that detect and deal with loss of direction and ineffective actions. Once these structures are in place and secure, however, processes that benefit from the continuous involvement of leaders must also allow professional peer connections to develop their own collective accountability systems based on collaborative ownership and commitment to improvement efforts. Successfully connecting peers with purpose, he contends, results in the development and flow of knowledge and skills about effective practice being continuously and openly shared, and represents a far more effective structure for improvement and change than either top-down strategic planning or independent teacher efforts.

In relation to the study, the drive to connect peers with purpose within an appraisal system explicitly supports this study's research objectives of achieving and operationalizing a focus on professional development and systematic learning within appraisal. The study should help illustrate how this might be accomplished and any challenges or successes involved.

### **3.7.3 Capacity Building Prevails**

Fullan (ibid. p. 60) also quite distinctly stresses that deliberate efforts to build both individual and group capacities, consisting of developing new competencies, knowledge and skills, and the use of new resources (time, ideas, expertise) are essential to change.

The conscious adoption of a committed stance to capacity building, he cautions, does not entail an avoidance of identifying things as effective or ineffective. Rather it involves investing in capacity building while suspending short-term judgment. Judgment and capacity building, he contends, can be combined. He also believes that efforts to build motivation are also important in capacity building and cannot be ignored. Commitment to “getting important things done collectively and continuously (ever learning)” he acknowledges, (ibid. p. 68) is a “tall order in a complex system, but it is exactly the order required to achieve improvement and change.”

In teacher appraisal, being committed to capacity building implies not only improving one’s understanding, knowledge, and skills related to effective appraisal, but also requires one to develop the ability to promote, engage and motivate teachers to adopt a professional development and learning stance connected to appraisals. It involves a commitment to uncovering ‘what works’ in helping build teachers’ individual and collective efficacy and engagement in appraisal.

### **3.7.4 Learning is the work**

Fullan (ibid. p. 89) draws a very clear distinction between externally based professional learning opportunities and ‘on-the job,’ context-embedded learning. He argues (ibid. p. 87) that opportunities for real change occur when “the job itself is the subject” of learning. Teachers, he argues, need to develop a depth of understanding about their collective work, to define the key practices crucial to success and to ensure that everyone commits to “doing those tasks well using the best known method of doing so” (ibid. p. 75). He also asserts the need for a balance between consistency and innovation in classroom practice where innovation results from reflective action and continual learning related to current observed practice. He also highlights (ibid. p. 127) the too familiar norm that “there is almost no opportunity for teachers to engage in continuous and substantial learning” within their own school contexts with colleagues who encounter similar challenges in practice.



In this study, 'Learning is the Work', implies not only learning to embed the characteristics of an effective appraisal system but establishing the conditions and structures for teachers to individually and collectively learn and innovate on the job while they pursue their own and school-level goals.

### **3.7.5 Transparency Rules**

Fullan (ibid. p. 99) defines transparency as essentially being explicitly open about practices most strongly connected with successful outcomes accompanied by a drive (ibid. p.99) and commitment to "pursuing and nailing down problems that recur."

In teacher appraisal, this would seem to recommend valid and reliable classroom observations, followed by honest and open dialogue about practice. Fullan (ibid. p.102) cites the need "to be prescriptive in demanding that all providers gather data, identify best practices, apply them and are held accountable for results." In this study, the provision to include evidence of student learning was built into the appraisal process through the inclusion of examples of documentary evidence teachers might use to meet their professional learning goals (Appendix C). Fullan views transparency as a necessary tool for successful improvement and change, as a source of pressure to support and motivate action. Of interest within this study is how teachers will respond to the expectation of the inclusion of evidence of student learning within appraisal. This could prove contentious or challenging.

### **3.7.6 Systems Learn**

Fullan (2008) suggests that deliberate action and efforts to address the previous five change constructs results in synergistic action that creates and releases two particular forces for change: knowledge and commitment. In essence, he contends that successfully working to embed these processes in a school results in a "system that learns from itself" (ibid. p. 103).

It was hoped that being aware of these ideas related to change and how they might be applied to appraisal would go some way towards developing an appraisal system that contributes to professional learning and development within the school context.

### **3.8 Summary**

Of particular interest in the study is how to support both individual and collective learning within appraisals and enable multiple forms of collaboration, both horizontal and vertical, so as to achieve a viable professional learning and development approach.

I used the six attributes of successful change identified by Fullan (2008) to inform implementation of the new appraisal process and as a lens through which to examine teachers' engagement. Change to a more professional learning and development approach to appraisal will be examined along the three dimensions suggested by Fullan: change in teachers' practice in the use of new or revised materials, new approaches, and alteration of beliefs (e.g., pedagogical assumptions and theories related to the function and practice of teacher appraisal (ibid. p.30)

Fullan (ibid. p.37) claims that, "change will always fail until we find some way of developing infrastructures, and processes that engage teachers in developing new knowledge, skills, and understandings." It is hoped that this study will help suggest the type of processes and structures that support the development of a plausible and pragmatic approach to professional learning linked to appraisal.

## **Chapter 4 Supporting teachers' professional learning and development through a process of Instructional Rounds**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the aims and rationale for including an Instructional Rounds protocol in the study and to explain how it facilitates the research aims. Details of how the initiative was specifically implemented using an adapted school-based protocol are also provided.

The capacity of teachers to support improvements in colleagues' practice is noted in the research literature (Johnson, 2012, Darling-Hammond, 2013, Fullan 2008, 2011, 2013). Agreement exists among these researchers that success of improvement initiatives and curriculum coherence is bolstered by the collaborative efforts of educators working on a shared purpose over time. Within the study I was eager to identify and explore the impact of structures and strategies that might offer both individual and collegial learning opportunities. It was not my initial intention to appraise individual teachers for their contributions to their team or for their input in whole-school initiatives or capacity building. My initial objective was to explore how individual teachers' professional development goals and needs identified through self-assessments, during or as a result of appraisals might be supported and met through interaction with colleagues. I was also interested to investigate how collaborative structures might support collegial learning. Collaborative collegial structures found in the literature include peer coaching, data teams, professional learning communities and Instructional Rounds.

Upon research I found Instructional Rounds provided a viable context within which to effectively operationalize the research aim to include a focus on teaming teams in the context of their every-day practice.

Many teachers experience professional learning and development however primarily through attendance at workshops and conferences, presentations from on-site consultants, or as the result of self-directed efforts linked to advanced degrees (OECD, 2009, 2013, Darling Hammond 2013, Johnson, 2012). Johnson (2012) in relation to the U.S. suggests while some schools have made changes to enable teams of teachers to consistently work together this cannot yet be considered the norm in education. This is in contrast to for example, high performing nations in Europe or Asia particularly Finland, Singapore and Japan where typically teachers have 15-25 hours per week to work

together (OECD, 2013) resulting in students learning gains from concerted teacher effort to coordinate and make successive contributions to practice.

## **4.2 The Instructional Rounds Process**

The research literature illustrates (See Roberts (2012), City et al. (2009), that the concept and practice of Instructional Rounds was initially grounded in a systems-level theory of change and improvement. The process involved groups of teachers from networks of schools within a school district observing each other's practice. Their objective was to focus on broad patterns of instructional practice across schools related to a pre-identified 'problem of practice' with a view to collaboratively develop improvement strategies.

Protocols used within this current study involve the use of an adapted school-based practice of rounds based on the work of Roberts (2012) and City et al. (2009). I argue, that the practice of Rounds offers a pragmatic framework for working on smaller, school level change like that within this study.

Instructional rounds is based on "the premise that collaborative observation and analysis of instructional practice, done routinely and within a disciplined stance that honours evidence and predictive validity, helps individuals, schools and school systems, focus their individual and collective learning toward improved learning for students" (Roberts, 2012).

Implementation of the Instructional Rounds process in this study consisted of 2 teaching teams comprising 2 members in each team, at successive grade levels.

### **Initial Preparation**

1. The provision of initial documentation to participating teams consisting of a short explanation of the purpose and process of instructional rounds. A 'problem of practice' and 'theory of action,' constructs which will be outlined later in this chapter, were also provided. Teams were asked to read the information (Appendix K) prior to an orientation meeting.

### **Orientation Meeting**

2. During a 30-minute orientation meeting teachers discussed the purpose and process of how Instructional Rounds would be implemented and clarified any questions they had related to the documentation. The 'problem of practice' and 'theory of action,' detailed later in this chapter were discussed. It was hoped that discussion would result in participant interest, buy-in, and ownership of the process. A timeline for 2 observational visits in each classroom was created, leading to participants observing 6 lessons while being involved in the delivery of 2 each.

### **Instructional Rounds Observations**

3. Collaborative observation of practice by the teams in each other's classrooms was carried out. Each participating teacher was asked to teach a writing lesson incorporating content from the school's literacy scope and sequence document. This context was chosen in light of Roberts' (2012, p. 64) caution that rounds won't lead to improvement unless the process is tied into other existing initiatives in ways that all educators understand.
4. Observing teachers were asked to take descriptive notes related to the 'instructional core'; what they saw and heard students and teachers doing with lesson content. Roberts (ibid. p 31) highlights that this observational practice "lays a foundation for a discussion that is grounded in evidence, rather than any one person's assumptions about what should or should not be happening" in classrooms. Data can then be used to gain insight and make predictions about teaching and learning.

### **Debrief Meeting – focus 1**

5. Once the series of observational rounds was completed a debriefing was held. Participants were asked to individually analyse their observational notes, note any data that seemed relevant to the 'problem of practice' and/or that seemed important. Teachers then shared their notes and set about collectively articulating any patterns they noticed across classrooms. The focus was on the teachers generating a common understanding of current practice. Roberts (ibid. p.51) cautions that at this point, it is important participants adopt and retain a descriptive rather than an evaluative stance.

Roberts (ibid. p. 5) additionally advises the use of focus questions to guide the debrief discussion and analysis of practice. In this study, participants were not expected to explicitly answer the exact focus questions outlined below but could use them as a framework to consider practice.

**Focus Questions:**

- What were the learning objective and success criteria?
  - How was the learning engagement/task presented?
  - How did the teacher build on students' prior knowledge, introduce new concepts, and provide practice opportunity and gradual release to students?
  - What are students learning?
  - Were students actively and responsibly participating in the learning process?
  - What was the nature of scaffolding and/or targeted support provided for all students to experience success?
  - What concrete pedagogical moves will help teachers increase rigor in classrooms?
- (Adapted, Roberts, 2012)

**Debrief Meeting – focus 2**

Participants were also asked to review and reflect on their notes in light of their own professional development goals and to identify any insights they may have gained from their observations in relation to these goals.

**Prediction**

6. In light of the evidence, participants were then asked to predict what students are learning using a predictive question adopted from Roberts (ibid. p. 47), “if you were a student at this school and you did everything you were expected to do, what would you know and be able to do in relation to writing?”

**Next level of work**

7. Participants were next asked to provide feedback on 3-4 focused suggestions for action steps that they as individuals and/or as a team or school should do or learn next in light of the data to address issues of continuity and innovation to improve practice.

Protocol adapted from Roberts (2012) and City et al. (2009)

Instructional Rounds observations are generally structured around a 'problem of practice'; "an instructional problem that is observable in the classroom, within the control of the educators in the school" (Roberts, 2012, p. 34).

Within the study, the focal point and 'problem of practice' for observations was contextualized (Appendix K) for teachers as:

The focus of rounds is to identify what consistent strategies are being used across the grades for writing and to plan how we might best horizontally and vertically align instruction across the school to build on each other's practice and ensure continuity of curricular experience for students.

Of interest is also how students articulate their learning in relation to writing, specifically how do they answer the three guiding questions, "What am I learning? How am I going? Where to next?" which Hattie (2012) suggests can be used to develop assessment-capable learners and raise student achievement. The final objective is to advise next steps in relation to the teaching and learning of writing

Roberts, (2012, pg. 57) also advises that a 'theory of action' which articulates "the leader's best ideas, at the moment, about the steps they think will lead to improvement," is provided to participants to help guide the next level of work.

The following 'theory of action' (Appendix K) was shared with participants:

Research suggests that stepping into classrooms reveals a huge range of ideas about how children learn and what sorts of tasks result in learning (Roberts, 2012).

Observation of each other's practice related to writing instruction should lead to an increased sense of shared knowledge about the methodologies and resources used to teach writing to students at this school. This increased insight will provide us with the chance to identify better ways to build on each other's practice and enhance student learning. These observations should also help us identify and validate what's already working, fill in any gaps, and innovate to design rigorous instruction, assessment and feedback to enhance student learning in writing. Roberts also suggests that if every teacher "throughout the school understands how his/her role impacts student performance and accepts personal responsibility for enabling all students to excel, then the achievement of students at all performance levels will accelerate" (ibid. p.141). It

was my hope that Instructional Rounds would provide both individual and collegial learning opportunities.

#### **4.3 Advantages to the application of the Instructional Rounds protocol within the study**

On a pragmatic level, protocols associated with Instructional Rounds are relatively straightforward, easy to understand and provided teachers and the researcher with a common framework, language, and comparatively non-judgmental structure to examine classroom practice. As Instructional Rounds focus on the 'instructional core', the relationship between what teachers do and the tasks given to students, the protocol offered a framework to learn from our own practices. Instructional Rounds are also a structure to facilitate a professional community's engagement in a continuous cycle of inquiry about instructional practice as it is happening in situ in a school. Ultimately, the aim of Instructional Rounds is for teachers within a school to "take control of their own learning in ways that are more likely to lead to sustained improvement over time" (ibid. p. 17), this addresses the central aim of the study.

The Instructional Rounds protocol is based on a number of central premises. It acknowledges, "most educators are currently working at, or near, the limits of their current knowledge and practice (ibid. p. ix) and advocates that real improvement in teaching and learning involves "systematically increasing the learning capacity of individuals and organizations in which they work." This option is broadly mirrored in the work of a growing number of educationalists (See Fullan, 2008, 2013, Hattie, 2012). The theory of action behind this approach advocates that "there needs to be structures in place for teachers to talk about problems of practice, discuss strategies for improvement, observe and analyse each other's practice, and set goals for the next level of work (Roberts, 2012, p. 7)". The approach "gives the system more potential leverage than a series of teacher-specific, individual interventions with/by teachers" (ibid. p. 5).

#### **4.4 Challenges to the implementation of Instructional Rounds**

Notwithstanding the potential advantages Instructional Rounds appear to offer, Roberts, (ibid. p. 2) acknowledges the practice as "culturally disruptive and structurally challenging." Finding time within an already packed school schedule is a challenge. The implementation of Instructional Rounds competes with an already extensive list of



priorities already existing within most schools. Roberts notes a “problem of frequency – most educators initially experience rounds as an event, rather than a regular, on-going improvement practice” (ibid. p 151). Instructional Rounds challenge the tradition of individual classroom teacher autonomy and the hierarchies within schools. They require that teachers and leaders work together to study practice. Leaders cannot function as supervisors in this process. Additionally, although school leaders may view the Rounds process as a professional learning opportunity, researchers highlight the potential for a difference to emerge in schools between compliance and active committed engagement in the process. (ibid. p. 59) Roberts (ibid.) argues that the ultimate success of Instructional Rounds is dependent on the ability and commitment of leaders being able to communicate the purpose and process of rounds to teachers within their school contexts. While being aware of these potential challenges, Instructional Rounds offered an interesting and exciting methodology to include a collaborative development focus in the new appraisal system.

#### **4.5 Summary**

Roberts (ibid. p. 56) highlights that “our current knowledge doesn’t fully explain how difficult it is to shift to a culture that focuses on the learning of everyone” within educational contexts. The current study offers interested readers insight in efforts at achieving a focus on adult learning linked to appraisal and how Instructional Rounds might work as a specific strategy to support both individual and collective teacher learning.

The next chapter outlines the methodology used to investigate research aims within the study.

## **Chapter 5 Methodology**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter details the research design used to address the aims of this research project. It provides the rationale for the particular choice of research paradigm, describes the methodology of how the research questions were operationalized and charts the methods used to ensure a thorough examination of the research questions. The planned phases of the research and the steps involved in their implementation are also explained. The chapter concludes with details of the data analysis process used within the study.

The research question driving this inquiry was:

How can teachers and principals within IB PYP schools achieve a focus on professional development and systematic learning within appraisal systems?

Related questions that guided the study were:

How might appraisal be effectively operationalized as a professional development tool at the school level to support on-going teacher learning and development in the implementation of standards and practices of the IB PYP?

What professional benefits and challenges might accrue during the implementation process?

### **5.2 Choice of research paradigm**

Research, according to Cohen et al. (2000, p. 3) is “concerned with understanding the world” and is “informed by how we view our world.” This current study is located within the interpretive research paradigm. The view of social reality best serves the aims of the study. It stresses the importance of the subjective experience of individuals in creating knowledge and understanding of their social world. In doing so, the interpretive framework provides a context within which to explore the multi-layered and complex reality of participant experience involved in a professional learning and development approach to teacher appraisal. In embracing this framework, I acknowledge that “situations are fluid and changing rather than fixed, and static; events and behaviour evolve over time and are richly affected by context” (ibid. p. 22).

I reject the view that all genuine knowledge of the multi-faceted complexity of teachers' professional growth and development can be captured, explained and governed by universal laws associated with an epistemological positivist perspective. I also challenge belief in the existence of comprehensive universal theories to account for human and social behaviour related to teacher appraisal, and indeed the ability to develop such laws. For these reasons, the theory of knowledge generation associated with the interpretative paradigm is a particularly useful perspective as it helps us make sense of, explain and interpret our lived experiences (Cohen et. al. 2000).

### **5.3 Research design**

The design and methodology of research is determined by its purpose. The adoption of an interpretative epistemological basis had consequences for the research methodology employed and involved a qualitative, as opposed to a quantitative approach. A qualitative approach would enable me capture and explore the complex reality of teacher appraisal within the natural contextual setting in which it was occurring. This approach would also support the gathering and analysis of data, which would provide insight, and understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions of events.

Qualitative research approaches have however been criticized for being cut-off from their larger social situations and contextual influences and of presenting only partial or biased versions of events. The need for an objective perspective and the task of transferring findings into a comprehensive body of reliable and valid knowledge that can add to the body of educational research is also a concern for critics of qualitative research. While I am aware of these arguments and perceived weaknesses, adopting a qualitative interpretative framework provided the opportunity to examine the research questions through the eyes of participants within their social context rather than imposing an external structure on events, which would be the case with a quantitative study.

Table 1 provides details of the research journey undertaken to explore and meet the study's objectives.

**Table 1 Research Journey**

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Research Instruments</b>	<b>Objective</b>
<b>Phase 1</b>		
Autumn 2013 – Spring 2014	Literature Review	<p>Research and identify central themes/issues related to teacher evaluation</p> <p>Development and refinement of research questions</p> <p>Research Evaluation tools and procedures</p> <p>Review IB PYP documentation</p> <p>Development of an evaluation tool and process that support a CPD stance toward evaluation and incorporate recommendations from the CIS/NEASC and IB PYP's Standards &amp; Practices</p>
<b>Phase 2</b>		
Autumn 2014 – Spring 2015	Literature Review	<p>Extend literature review to address emerging interest in team-based approach to capacity building</p> <p>Research use of an Instructional Rounds methodology</p> <p>Research use of Fullan's Change Theory as an analytical framework</p> <p>Attended INTASE Conference, Singapore: Fullan &amp; Hargreaves</p> <p>Determine data gathering instruments</p>
Autumn 2014 – Spring 2015	Empirical data gathering: interviews (initial, interim, final), class observations, Instructional Rounds, focus group interviews	<p>Conduct performance development process</p> <p>Introduce and conduct Instructional Rounds</p>
Spring 2015 – Summer 2015	Analysis of case study data	Development of findings and implications

## **5.4 Research methodology and methods**

Researchers draw a distinction between methodology and methods in educational research. Cohen et al. (2000, p. 45) state that the aim of methodology is “to help us understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself.” Methods refer to the tools employed to gather the research data. In relation to the current study no one method was deemed ideal just more appropriate than others. The following section illustrates the application of the tools employed in the study.

The study was conducted in two distinct phases. Phase 1 involved the development of an appraisal tool upon which to base teacher evaluation in the international school where the study was conducted. Any tool or implementation process chosen, however, needed to be capable of addressing and achieving three broad objectives. It must promote and support a professional development focus within teacher appraisal, incorporate the required teaching standards and practices of the IB PYP, and address the recommendations of the school’s two accreditation bodies related to teacher appraisal.

Phase 2 of the inquiry, examining the appraisal system in action and appraising its ability to promote professional learning and development, was accomplished through empirical data gathering, principally in-depth interviews, class room observations and visits, a focus group interview, and particularly significant were classroom observations using an Instructional Rounds peer-observation protocol (Roberts 2012, City et al. 2009). These empirical methods allowed exploration of both the primary and related research questions.

### **5.4.1 Phase 1 – development of the appraisal tool**

The new appraisal tool was developed using a three-stage approach: an initial documentary analysis of the IB PYP standards and practices, a review of the recommendations for action related to teacher appraisal provided to the school by CIS/NEASC as part of the reaccreditation process and a literature review of current prominent teacher evaluation tools in the public domain. Pertinent information from these three sources informed the design of a tool and implementation process for teacher appraisal. Danielson’s Framework for Teaching (2013), Marzano’s Observational Protocol (2013), a number of national frameworks for teaching standards and a comprehensive literature review helped place the study in the broader context of a

suitable teacher evaluation tool. A sample of this appraisal tool is included below. The full appraisal tool and implementation process can be found in Appendix B. The implementation process is also reflected in the interviews and observational protocols detailed later in this chapter.

**Table 2 Teaching standards and levels of performance**

Standard 1: Student Learning and Achievement			
Centering instruction on high expectations for student learning and achievement			
1. Sets high standards for achievement by developing and communicating clear daily learning targets and/or longer-term goals with appropriate scales/rubrics.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not set daily learning targets or longer-term goals, or does so only occasionally.	Provides learning targets and goals, but does not provide scales or rubrics that describe or measure performance.	Provides clear learning targets and goals with performance scales or rubrics.  Monitors student understanding of targets and performance measures.	A recognized leader and role model who develops and applies new strategies for students who do not understand or respond to targets, goals and performance measures.

Standard 2: Instructional Practices			
Demonstrating effective teaching practices.			
11. Uses a variety of instructional strategies and resources to encourage student engagement, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not use various types of instructional strategies and appropriate resources to achieve instructional goals and teach students critical thinking skills.  Does not monitor student engagement nor does apply reengagement strategies as needed.	Assures student growth with frequent instructional opportunities for students to use critical thinking and problem solving skills.  Monitors student engagement. Applies re-engagement strategies as needed.  Does not monitor if strategies have their desired effect.	Effectively applies a range of instructional techniques that require students to think critically and problem solve.  Monitors student engagement and applies reengagement strategies as needed.  Monitors the extent to which strategies have their desired effect.	Frequently uses a range of instructional techniques that require critical thinking.  Offers constructive assistance and models the use of strategies, materials and technology to maximize learning.  Applies and monitors new strategies for students who do not respond to typical strategies.

2. Uses a variety of grouping techniques to support learning.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not use a variety of individual and cooperative learning activities to promote critical thinking skills.	Uses a variety of learning situations such as independent, small group and whole class instruction to enhance individual and collective thinking skills.	Effectively combines flexible and varied independent, cooperative and whole-class learning situations. Applies grouping strategies to maximize student understanding and learning.	Models and/or shares with others the effective use of flexible and varied independent, collaborative and whole-class learning situations.
3. Uses questioning and discussion techniques to deepen student understanding.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Low cognitive challenge questions, with single correct response, are asked in rapid succession.</p> <p>Discussion is between the teacher and students. Students are not invited to speak directly to one another.</p> <p>Teacher does not probe students to explain their thinking.</p> <p>Only a few students participate in the discussion.</p>	<p>Questions lead students through a single path of inquiry.</p> <p>Many questions have a single correct response. Students are called on quickly.</p> <p>Students are invited to engage in discussion, to respond to one another, and to explain their thinking, but only some students attempt to do so.</p>	<p>Uses open-ended questions, inviting students to think and/or offer multiple possible answers.</p> <p>Makes effective use of wait time.</p> <p>Discussions enable students to talk to one another without on-going mediation by teacher.</p> <p>Calls on most students, even those who don't initially volunteer. Many students actively engage in the discussion.</p> <p>Asks students to justify their reasoning, and most attempt to do so.</p>	<p>A recognized leader and role model who uses a variety or series of questions or prompts to challenge students cognitively, advance high-level thinking and discourse and prompt metacognition.</p> <p>Students formulate many questions, initiate topics, and challenge one another's thinking.</p> <p>Virtually all students are engaged in the discussion.</p>

4. Identifies appropriate academic vocabulary and methods relevant to the subject and to learning targets and uses various strategies for student acquisition.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not identify important academic vocabulary specific to the lesson or does so in a manner that does not reflect the critical content.	Identifies important academic vocabulary specific to the lesson and makes students aware of the meaning of these terms.  Does not monitor whether students have internalized the meaning of these terms using their own background knowledge.	Identifies important academic vocabulary specific to the lesson and makes students aware of the meaning of these terms.  Monitors the extent to which students have internalized the meaning of these terms using their own background knowledge.	A recognized leader and role model who adapts or creates new strategies to meet the specific needs of students for whom the typical application of strategies does not produce the desired effect.

#### 5.4.2 Phase 2 – Empirical data gathering: A qualitative case study approach

Adopting an interpretative epistemological framework influenced the research methodology employed in phase 2 of the research design. As the literature review highlighted, the adoption of a professional learning focus is still a relatively new direction within teacher appraisal, and its successful implementation is not without significant challenges (Papay 2012, Johnson, 2012). Research questions were operationalized and examined through a qualitative case study approach utilizing in-depth interviews, classroom observations, an Instructional Rounds protocol (City et al. 2009, Roberts, 2012) and a focus group interview. An in-depth investigation using a case study methodology based on the generation of data through multiple methods from multiple sources (Miles, 2015, p. 310) was deemed best suited to addressing the particular research focus. This would provide for a detailed, comprehensive examination and interpretation of the significant factors, events, possible cause and effect processes influencing teachers' and principals' involvement in appraisal (Cohen et al. 2000). The methodology would permit "a more holistic study of complex social networks and of the complexities of social action and social meaning" (Feagin et al. 1991 p. 6) within teacher appraisal.

The ability of case study methodology to attend to and probe deeply any unique, complex, and/or unanticipated factors linked to participants' involvement in appraisals and take into account any discrepancies or conflicts between viewpoints held by



participants (Miles, 2015) made the current study particularly appropriate to case study research. It would enable a better understanding of the situation that might otherwise be lost in a larger scale and/or qualitative approach. Data would be grounded in the lived reality of participants' experiences with appraisal and reflect their perspectives (Geertz, 1973 cited in Cohen et al. 2000). The resulting data from this in-depth process would thus support and allow for consideration and analysis of how the appraisal process might be more effectively operationalized at the school level thus addressing the major research focus.

The adoption of a case study research approach such as this accepts that "examining the context and other complex conditions related to the case(s) being studied are integral to understanding the case(s)" (Yin, 2013, p. 4), and allows one take into account and "retain a holistic and real world-perspective" (ibid. p. 4) in a bid to understand a socially complex phenomenon such as an appraisal process. Yin's (2013, p. 4) assertion that the more research questions require an extensive, in-depth description and understanding and seek to explain the "how" or "why" some social phenomenon works, the more that case study research will be relevant affirms the suitability of a case study approach to the current study.

As the case study would be conducted over a period of time, it would also enable teachers' on-going engagement with the appraisal process and any changes to this to be monitored, explored and analysed. In addition, as Turner and Danks (2014) highlight, that given the complex nature of organizational settings, the case study approach is particularly suited to help performance improvement professionals such as educators make better sense of workplace sites and further support problem solving.

Miles (2015 p. 312) highlights that "through the context of case study, along with connections that we make to our own experiences, we come to understand practices that inform these." Therefore, to facilitate this interpretive process the need exists to define and establish for readers the boundaries and parameters of the study (Cousin 2005). The study needs to demonstrate being a case of something, (Thomas, 2011). (Miles, 2015 p. 310) argues this "construction, bounding and representation of the case, occurs through the decisions and practices of the researcher and the researched in the generation, analysis and representation of data." Cousin (2005) highlights bounding concerns the physical confines, activities and the time span of the study, while Yin (1994) demonstrates that one way of bounding a study is through the use of research questions. Within the current study, the site encompasses the international school within

which the study is located while the case, or unit of analysis, comprises of an exploration of four teachers' and the researchers' engagement in an appraisal process over a two-year period with a view to examining how continuing professional development might be strengthened within the system.

Although there are some points of convergence between case study and action research adoption of the latter approach was rejected as it "involves the study of a particular change intervention through a number of reflective stages" (Cousin, 2005). In contrast, rather than proposing a particular change intervention the current study aimed to explore and consider the multiplicity of factors that might impinge upon and potentially improve teacher engagement with professional development linked to appraisal. Action research also tends to treat participants as co-researchers (Cousin, 2002). This was not the intent of the current study rather it attempts to "provide a holistic portrayal and understanding of the research setting (Cousin, 2005, p. 423)."

## **5.5 The contribution of case study to the body of educational research**

Notwithstanding the choice of a case study approach to frame this inquiry, I acknowledge that case studies are not without weaknesses or limitations. Criticisms about the ability of case studies to contribute robustly to the body of educational knowledge in terms of their generalizability to other situations and issues such as the subjectivity, reliability, and validity of evidence have been highlighted as potential weaknesses in this form of research (Cohen et al. 2000, Flyvbjerg 2006, Miles 2015). Efforts to address these constructs and concerns are discussed below.

Flyvbjerg, (2006) Miles (2015) among others, have disputed the emphasis on generalizability to critique case study research. In arguing the concept of generalization as problematic Flyvbjerg (2006) asserts it is only one of many ways in which knowledge is gained and accumulated. Using examples of strategically chosen and critical cases Flyvbjerg (ibid. citing the work of Kuhn (1987) attests the particular strength of case study to add to the body of educational research through the provision of exemplars; "a scientific discipline without a large number of thoroughly executed case studies is a discipline without systematic production of exemplars and a discipline without exemplars is an ineffective one" (ibid. p. 242). It is the very focus on the particular, on examples and experiences Flyvbjerg (ibid.) argues, wherein lies the strength of case studies. Human behaviour he attests cannot simply be understood as rule governed acts, cases are a way to make inferences to the best explanations. While Hays (2004, citing Stake,

1995, p. 85) highlights that “case study ordinarily leaves the determination of the worth and value to the consumer/audience who may construct their own understanding by drawing on information in the case.”

My perspective is not to apply the term generalization but to argue this single in-depth study should prove instructional in providing insight into similar issues in other comparable situations. One advantage of case study research “lies in recognizing the contributions that a genuine creative encounter can make to new forms of understanding in education and in viewing different ways of seeing as new ways of knowing (Simons, 1996). The current study can form part of a rich archive of similar material that can be subsequently reinterpreted to develop further insights in the area.

The research results may be generalizable only where other readers see the potential application, but the accessibility of the research process, analysis and findings should allow those seeking to achieve a similar professional development focus within teacher appraisal to judge the implications of the study for themselves. The study may also prove insightful to other IB PYP schools seeking to strengthen implementation of the IB PYP’s required standards and practices through a focus on professional development at the individual and team level, in or outside teacher appraisal.

## **5.6 The authenticity and trustworthiness within the case study approach**

Bassey (2003) argues that meaning and understanding must replace concepts of ‘proof’ and proposes ‘trustworthiness’ as a preferred term to validity and reliability of qualitative research findings. He puts forward what he terms ‘8 tests of trustworthiness’ (outlined below), which he suggests should be applied to the research process:

### **‘Tests of trustworthiness’ in qualitative research**

#### **Has the research process involved:**

Prolonged engagement with data sources?

Persistent observation of emerging issues?

Raw data adequately check against sources?

Sufficient triangulation of raw data leading to analytical statements?

Systematic testing of working hypothesis, or evaluation, or emerging story, against analytical statements?

Critical analysis applied to challenge findings?

A research account sufficiently detailed to provide readers with confidence in the findings?

Case record that provides an adequate audit trail?

Source: Adapted Bassey (2003)

Similarly, Cohen et al. (2000, p. 106) stress the importance of framing issues of validity within the premise of the research paradigm being used and the need to replace positive notions of validity with concepts such as 'authenticity' (Guba and Lincoln 1989), and/or 'confidence' in the research (Hammersley, 1992). Cohen et al. (2000 p. 117) propose that reliability of qualitative data is essentially constructed as consistency and dependability. It is concerned with the precision, accuracy and comprehensiveness of research evidence, findings and reporting.

Tensions about the theoretical rigor and strength of case study has also been linked to the possibility that the approach allows for the focus, evidence and concepts generated to reflect more subjective researcher bias (Flyvbjerg, 2006, Miles, 2015). Flyvbjerg (2006) however argues that the in-depth nature and multiple sources of evidence support researchers in revising any pre-conceived views, concepts, assumptions and hypothesis and attests there is no greater bias towards verification than with qualitative methods.

In this study, authenticity with the interpretive paradigm is addressed by using the natural setting of the school as the principal source of data, reporting the meaning that subjects ascribe to their perspectives, experiences, opinions, etc. and acknowledging the context and socially situated nature of the data. Methodological rigor in terms of authenticity and trustworthiness of research data was additionally achieved through the specific choice of participants, the use of triangulation of research instruments used for data collection: interviews, classroom observations, Instructional Rounds and a focus group interview. Data are presented in participants' terms rather than this researcher's and were analysed inductively rather than using previously determined categories which, supported efforts to maintain objectivity and reduce bias.

## **5.7 Triangulation of research methods**

In the current study, combining data from the full range gathered: teachers' self-assessments, semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, an Instructional Rounds protocol, a focus group discussion and participant reflections led to a fuller view

of the personal and interpersonal complexities involved in achieving a professional learning and development approach to teacher appraisal. It is argued the use of these multiple research methods enables greater confidence in the research data collected. Cohen et al, (2000) propose that triangulation in relation to research data appears particularly useful in uncovering and revealing the complex and multiple realities found in case study research.

Triangulation of research methods has also been associated however with criticisms of trying to apply positivist values to qualitative research (Silverman, 1985, cited in Cohen et al., 2000). Within the present study, use of combined levels of triangulation and analysis at the individual and teaching team level allowed a more meaningful picture of teacher appraisal to emerge.

## **5.8 Ethical considerations**

Cohen et al. (2000, p. 67), highlight that the way information gathered related to teacher appraisal is “disseminated and to whom may have powerful consequences and implications for teachers’ professional and personal lives.” Considerations these researchers identify that need to be addressed are issues of obtaining explicit authorization and consent, ensuring the research process is transparent, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring data collected and judgment made is accurate and fair. I hold that within the context of research methods used in the study, awareness and effort were applied to address and incorporate these guidelines.

In relation to ethical considerations, prior to requesting teachers’ involvement in the study, the purpose, background and aims of the research were explained to participants. Two teachers at consecutive grades readily agreed to participate and appeared to accept my objective of using the context of their individual engagement with the appraisal process as part of my own learning journey in teacher appraisal. I also believed that their participation was in part due to their willingness to support this academic study. I explained that every effort to ensure confidentiality and anonymity would be maintained. During the course of the study, however, I experienced tension and concern wondering if through being linked with the author’s name on the study participants might be identifiable to peers. The use of pseudonyms and altered details helped relieve this tension somewhat. An explanation of potential benefits that might reasonably be expected, specifically better understanding and increased involvement with their own appraisals, were explained. Teachers appeared interested and keen to

participate in the Instructional Rounds protocol. In fact, following its implementation, one teacher purchased two professional books on the topic. An offer to answer any queries and for participants to opt out during the course of the study was also given.

### 5.8.1 Researcher's role in the study

I am the primary school principal of the international school where the study was located. I assumed the role of participant observer and was engaged in activities that formed the focus of observations. A participant observation role, I argue, was not unusual given the 'natural' school setting, the nature of the research study focus and related role and responsibilities I held in teacher appraisal. An exposition of the strengths and drawbacks of an internal as opposed to an external researcher is set out in the table below. Kennedy-Lewis (2012) argues both groups bring specific strengths to the research task but highlights how making transparent the dilemmas involved in the research process allows readers make informed judgments about how involvement in the field shaped the research process, findings and conclusions.

**Table 3 Relative strengths and weaknesses linked to internal and external researchers**

<b>Internal researcher</b>	<b>External researcher</b>
Brings tacit practical knowledge to the task of gathering and analysing data to solve classroom-based educational problems and can offer an insider's perspective into classroom ecologies (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012)	Even if an outside observer assumes an ethnographic stance and spends considerable time at the site, in analysing patterns and discrepancies that occur they provide a truly different view than the interpretive frameworks of practitioners (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990)
Uniquely situated to conduct such inquiries: They have opportunities to observe learners over long periods of time in a variety of situations (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990)	Permission to carry out the inquiry must be sought and obtained
Risk of blurring distinctions between the researcher's and practitioners' actions (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012)	Potential to contribute greater objectivism and impartiality to the research field
May struggle with the shift from experientially based career tasks to the more theoretical research base (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012) Relative novice/apprentice	Experience in field of social scientific inquiry
Can assist rapport building with participants and contribute useful insights into the nuances of participants' comments and behaviours (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012) Potential for reactivity; positive or negative predisposition towards	Potential for reactivity; presence of the researcher may alter the situation if participants wish to avoid, impress or exert influence (Hawthorn Effect)

evaluation may result in biased reporting to researcher (Halo Effect) (Cohen et al. 2000)	
Research questions, theoretical frameworks, documentation and analysis may lack the methodological and systematic rigor than more formal research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990)	Researchers tend to have training in the traditions of social science research and to come from diverse methodological and theoretical backgrounds and to be conversant with critical, feminist, and postmodern approaches to research (Anderson, 2002)
Requires greater attention to reflexivity; may predispose researchers to make particular assumptions about teachers, students, and schools and prevent them exploring multiple meanings or rival explanations of interpretations. (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012)	May be more adapt at examining taken-for-granted assumptions making the familiar strange (Cohen et al. 2000)
Ready access to the field but negotiating relationships may challenge objectivity, responsibility, and ethics. (Kennedy-Lewis, 2012)	Gaining access to the field may require greater negotiation. (Anderson, 2002)
Action-oriented; presents the potential for personal, professional, and organizational learning, and school reform. (Anderson 2002)	Audience may be other academic researchers
Research is the voices of teachers/practitioners themselves; makes visible, teachers' roles in the generation of knowledge and reveals what teachers regard as the seminal issues about teaching and learning. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990)	Research focus may reflect what academics have chosen to study and write about.  May construct and predetermine teachers' roles in the research process, thereby framing and mediating teachers' perspectives through researchers' perspectives. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990)
Often perceived to have lower academic status (Anderson 2002) Practitioner research cannot often claim the kind of disciplinary legitimacy. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990)	Academics have evolved a complex set of criteria and standards for judging the quality and contribution of research in the academic community and are organized to provide formal and informal opportunities for response and critique. (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990)
May produce a form of knowledge that is perhaps more generative for practitioner readers than much formal research. (Anderson, 2002)	Academic research sometimes experienced by teachers as propositional and theoretical knowledge with little linkage to the personal, contextual, subjective, and relational experiences of their educational contexts (Clandinin and Connelly (1995) cited in Anderson 2002)

Sources: Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1990, Anderson, 2002 and Kennedy-Lewis, 2012, Cohen et al. (2000)

As the study took place within my usual work context, I contend a participant observer role and shared frame of reference with teachers within the school context afforded me the opportunity to gain a more holistic view of teachers' involvement in continuing professional learning. It enabled me identify, discern and clarify evolving issues directly and hence develop understanding of the interrelationship of factors influencing participants' involvement or non-involvement in formative professional development opportunities. Glesne (1999, p. 396) describes the role of the participant observers, as one of "you risking the eye of the uninvolved observer; yet the more you participate the greater your opportunity to learn."

### **5.8.2 Issues of access and consent**

Consent to carry out the inquiry was willingly granted by the Head of School, who stated that she recognized its potential to address recommendations from the school's two accreditation bodies related to the need for a new teacher appraisal system. While teacher appraisal is part of the assigned professional practices in my job description, responsibility for the development of a new appraisal system was not. This was the responsibility of the entire administration team, composed of the School Head, Secondary, Middle School, Kindergarten and Primary school principals.

The School Head and my colleagues on the Administration team, who were already heavily involved in addressing other recommendations from the accreditation report, were content, and in fact appreciative of my offer to take the lead with this initiative. Access to the site and participants was unproblematic as I was the primary school principal in the school in which the study was conducted.

### **5.9 Participants**

Based on a directive from the School Head, all teachers, from kindergarten to grade twelve, were required to engage in the newly developed teacher evaluation tool and process. For the purpose of this study however, I approached 4 class teachers individually, and asked if they might allow me to examine the new process in the context of their engagement with the system. This group comprised the 2 teaching teams that formed the focus of the study. The teams taught at consecutive grade levels. Focusing on two teaching teams at consecutive grade levels facilitated an exploration of horizontal and vertical relationships in teaching teams in relation to professional learning and development linked appraisals and facilitated the implementation of an Instructional



Round protocol between the two teams. All four participants completed the study. However, during the write up of this thesis, word constraints meant I did not include the individual participation of Ellen, one of the 4 teachers. As she formed part of the group categorized during analysis as ‘engaged and involved’ and there were other members in this group, I felt this a workable solution. Her participation as part of the group is included in the analysis and feedback on instructional rounds in chapter 7.

I began the study with four individual participants. Due to word constraints within the thesis data from only three participants is reported at the individual level, however to maintain the focus on two teaching teams, the involvement of Ellen, the fourth participant is included in the analysis of Instructional Rounds in the following chapter.

### **Rachel**

Rachel is in her early thirties, she has been teaching for 7 years, 4 of these in a national state system and 3 at another International School. The first year of the research inquiry was Rachel’s first year at the school and her second year’s experience with the PYP. Rachel has received initial authorized training in the IB PYP. She holds a masters degree in literacy. Rachel has not yet held a leadership position. In terms of professional learning, while Rachel chose to participate in some professional development opportunities off-campus, she was very clear that she wanted to focus on her classroom practice. In terms of incorporating new initiatives, she articulated; “ I don’t want to spread myself too thinly.”

### **Mark**

Mark is in his late thirties and has been teaching for 8 years; 2 in a national state system, 2 at another International School and 4 years at the school, which comprised the focus of the study. He holds a B.Ed., and avails of most professional development opportunities offered by the school. Prior to the second year of the study, Mark was offered the opportunity to help lead an initiative to strengthen vertical progression of a specific curriculum area. This decision was based on my desire to explore how improvements could be made, on Mark’s self-reported interest and related to a comment Mark made linked to recognition he’d received for a non-academic contribution to school; “that’s not fully representative of what I can contribute.” The role involves a small stipend but no formally scheduled release time. Mark has attended 2 IB PYP training workshops and facilitated a faculty meeting focused on sharing of PYP practice. He was also part of a weekly reading group that explored John Hattie’s book, Visible Learning for Teachers (2012).

## Harry

Harry is in his mid forties and has been teaching for 15 years, 3 in a national state system and 12 at the school that formed the context of the study. Harry was teaching at the school when the decision was made to adopt the IB PYP. He was involved in the school's authorization, two reevaluation processes and led the self-study group that examined the school's written curriculum. Harry has facilitated some faculty meetings focused on sharing of practice. He participates in most professional development workshops offered by the school and consistently reads professional books/articles. He holds a masters degree and has attended a number of basic and more advanced IB PYP training workshops. Table 4 below summarizes participants' details.

**Table 4 Participants**

	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Years of Teaching Experience</b>	<b>Years of Experience with PYP</b>	<b>Time at the school</b>	<b>Education</b>
Harry	5	15 years	8 years	12 years	MA
Rachel	5	7 years	2 years	2 years	MA
Ellen	6	6 years	6 years	6 years	B.Ed.
Mark	6	7 years	4 years	4 years	Bed.

Analysis of the data gathered revealed two distinct conceptual groupings of participants in terms of their engagement with the process. Rachel and Harry comprised one group; it is argued their participation can reasonably be characterized as one of engagement and involvement. Mark's participation might be described as more measured compliance than active or interested engagement. Mark's engagement with the appraisal process, for reasons that will be discussed later, is treated as a discrete case later in this chapter.

## 5.10 Constraints and limitations to the study

There are a number of constraints and considerations important to this research. The sampling strategy, while small, is suitable as it generally reflects the gender, age and range of teaching experience representative of the wider primary school faculty. I am happy to acknowledge that I am indebted to the participants for their involvement in the study. Transcribing the large amount of research data also required that I focus on a small number of participants. I was reasonably confident that the chosen teachers represented a sufficient range of practice to enable me to gain insight into a variety of participant experiences. I decided to limit the study to classroom teachers, rather than possibly include single subject teachers, as the former were the teachers with whom I had the most constant, individual contact and easy access. The interest shown in the

study by the Head of School and the subsequent expansion of the process across the school resulted in additional time demands as the tool and process were further refined and developed.

### **5.11 Methods employed**

Phase 2 of the research design began with a presentation to participants of the newly developed tool and process. Participants completed a self-assessment using the newly developed Performance Development Program (Appendix B). Standards and indicators of practice were used inform discussion and essentially acted as question starters and discussion points for the associated standard at three points in the study: beginning, mid-point and end of the data gathering process. Interviews lasted approximately 40 minutes.

In addition, I conducted two classroom observations in each participant's classroom. Over the course of the study teachers also participated in 6 classroom observations and facilitated 2 lessons for their peers to observe broadly following protocols suggested by Roberts (2012, City et al. 2009). Information distributed to participants prior to Instructional Rounds is documented in (Appendix K) After Rounds were completed a focus group discussion (Appendix J) was held to discuss practices observed and teachers completed short written reflections. (Appendix I).

**Table 5 Empirical data gathering process**

Timeline	Engagements
Spring 2014	2 Participants conducted self-assessment using appraisal tool
Autumn 2014	2 Additional participants conducted self-assessment using appraisal tool  Stage 1 of appraisal process: initial interviews, review of self-assessment and identification of growth goals with individual participants
Autumn 2014	Class observations of each participant
Spring 2015	Stage 2 of appraisal process: interim interviews, feedback on observations, discussion regarding progress on growth goals with each participant
Spring 2015	Stage 3 of appraisal process: 2 short observations of each participant focused on growth goals
Winter-Spring 2015	Instructional Rounds process & focus group discussion
Late Spring 2015	Stage 4 of appraisal process: final interview related to growth goals and summative assessment against Standards and Indicators, identification of new growth goals with participants

### Setting annual performance and development objectives

Step 1: Reflect on your performance against each standard.

*Circle the performance level which best describes your current practice.*



Step 2: Identify the critical skills where you believe improvement in performance is required.

*Identify the top 2 or 3 skills, which you believe are most important to drive improved performance.*

*Separately. Describe the professional development you require.*



Step 3: Discuss your assessment with your principal and set annual performance and professional development objectives.

*Review the results of your self-assessment with your principal. Agree and set your professional development objectives.*

### Completing the interim review

Step 1: Reflect on your performance against your annual objectives and goals.

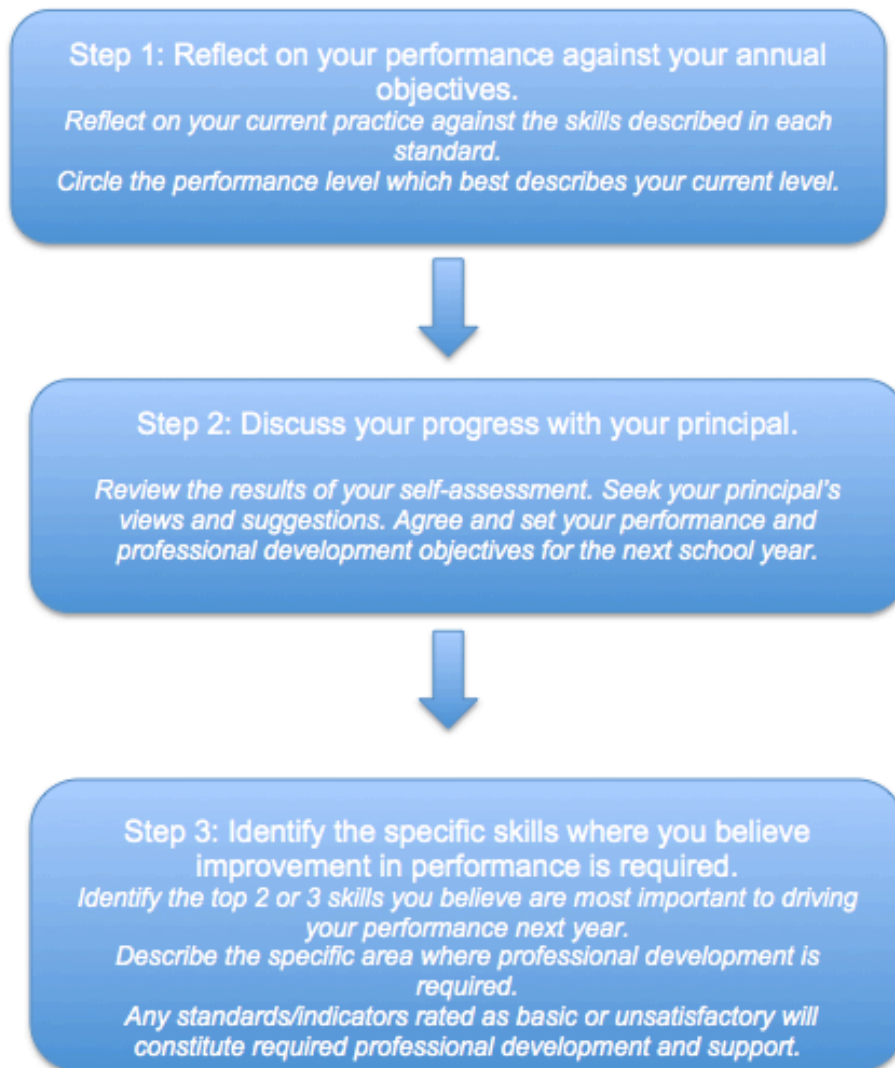
*Reflect on the professional development used to support your performance objectives.*



Step 2: Discuss your progress with your principal

*Review the results of your self-assessment with your principal. Seek your principal's views and suggestions. Determine together whether any adjustment is required to your performance and professional development objectives.*

### Completing the annual review



**Figure 1 Performance Development Process**

#### **5.11.1 The Interview process - strengths and challenges**

Initial individual interviews with each of the four participants involved a shared discussion of the appraisal tool, which comprised the teaching standards and practice level indicators. The appraisal process itself was also discussed to ensure that participants had a practical understanding of both. A primary objective was for teachers to discuss their performance with me and individually and/or collaboratively identify performance objectives and professional development goals they would focus on during the course of the study. I hoped that the dialogue would help uncover the type of support required for teachers to achieve progress toward their professional development goals.

The process required teachers to reflect and self-assess their performance against each of eight teaching standards at four performance levels. Participants completed the self-assessment prior to the interview. Their prepared responses formed part of the discussion. Two or three specific skills considered pertinent to driving improvement in overall performance were identified as professional development foci rather than teachers attempting improvement across all standards and skills where they deemed growth was needed. These selected skills formed the annual performance objectives for the teacher and the criteria against which he or she would be appraised. The agreed-upon professional learning/development goals were recorded in the 'Performance Dialogue form', and served as the anchor point for the interim and final interviews.

The interim interviews and dialogue provided an important opportunity to review, assess and explore progress toward the professional development goals agreed upon at the beginning of the process and to identify any specific areas where further development and support might be beneficial/required. Noteworthy at this point is acknowledgement that classroom observations and any documentary evidence supplied by teachers together with the interim dialogue would be used to gauge participants' progress towards meeting their goals.

Interim interviews also provided me a chance to detect and explore any changes in the teachers' beliefs, feelings or attitudes about different aspects of the appraisal process. I was able to follow up and probe what participants might have considered successes, benefits, challenges or any reported changes in teaching practice resulting from their involvement in the appraisal process. I used data from the previous interviews to reflect and follow up on any contributions that were unclear and on issues I might have missed.

During the final individual interviews, I asked teachers to assess their progress against the performance objectives and professional development goals identified at the beginning of the school year and to develop performance objectives and professional development goals for the subsequent year. My reflection prior to the interview focused on developing questions that would pick up any unclear or outstanding issues related to the previous data. I felt that the repeated interviews and collaborative nature of discussion provided a sense of a collaborative approach to appraisal.

The use of appraisal standards and indicators to guide interview discussions meant these functioned almost as a semi-structured interview style. The primary objective was to enable participants to tell their 'own story' in relation to their involvement with the

appraisal process. Laing (1967, p. 66, cited in Cohen et al. 2000) argues the legitimacy of interviews and the “centrality of human interaction for knowledge production, knowledge should be seen as constructed between participants, as such the interview is not exclusively either subjective or objective, it is intersubjective.”

The use of semi-structured interviews in contrast to formally structured interviews offered a number of advantages such as freedom for both parties to explain, modify, clarify, and reiterate questions. I could prompt and probe for meaning, confirm and reinterpret responses in an effort to gain understanding of what participants really felt, thought and believed about the appraisal process. Similarly, interviewees were free to answer questions in their own words and to add their own perspectives thus allowing me form a better understanding of participant’s perspectives, challenges and hopes.

Regardless of the opportunities for data collection that interviews provide, significant challenges exist in conducting successful interviews. Researchers (Cohen et al. 2000, p. 270) suggest several causes of weakness, tension and potential bias related to the prospect of unequal questioning, an imbalance of factual and attitudinal issues, the possibility of poor rapport and/or an unequal power between interviewer and interviewee in relation to the interview topic, the possibility of weak interview techniques, including poor prompting and/or biased probing.

I believe however, that a number of factors in the current study contributed to participants being able to tell ‘their story’, and express their thoughts, feelings and beliefs related to the new appraisal system. Significant among these, I would argue, was a sense of familiarity, trust and the amiable relations that existed between the participants and myself based on prior experience with each other both socially and professionally. While as a principal I acknowledge the possibility of participants possibly providing answers in the way they feel was desired. I don’t think this was the case with this study. I believe that the teachers’ willingness to participate, their acceptance of the process being linked to their own learning journeys, a joint ‘frame of reference’ and shared experience lead to them freely engaging in the process with me as co-constructors and co-producers of knowledge and understanding related to appraisal.



### **5.11.2 Recording and transcribing interview data**

Participants readily agreed to allow me record the interviews using 'Voice Memos', an iPhone Application. The iPhone was placed on the table and left to run freely during interviews. Possibly because of its small size and unobtrusiveness, laying flat on an already crowded table, participants seemed relatively unfazed, became caught up and involved in the conversation and appeared to pay relatively little notice to the device. This openness to recording might also be indicative of an acceptance and familiarity with iPhones in modern society.

Transcribing interviews proved much more of a challenge. In an attempt to manage time and the large amount of audio text generated, I tried a number of speech-to-text software applications, in particular; 'Soundflower,' 'Maverick' and 'Dragon Dictate.' None proved adept at recognizing and successfully dealing with natural discussion speed, often over-lapping comments or the voice patterns of a dual dialogue proved problematic. I opted to use 'Transcribe,' an audio player integrated with a text editor on the same screen. This eased the process of typing the audio text but nonetheless was very time consuming.

### **5.11.3 Classroom observations**

I conducted two observations in each of the four classrooms, the first after each interview with individual teachers, the second one happened after the interim interview. My objective was to note as much of natural classroom interaction as possible. I focused on verbal interactions with students, student responses and actions (on-or off-task; engagement in learning activities). I also noted the type of tasks students were engaged in. Data gathered were later reviewed using the school's eight new teaching standards and indicators and teachers' self-assessments to gain a more holistic view of teachers' strengths and any areas when improvements might be made. My initial goal was also to ascertain if teachers rated at an unsatisfactory level on any standards. Should this have been the case, that standard or specific indicator would become a required development goal for the teacher during a subsequent appraisal round.

Observation and analysis of classroom observation data by the interim stage of the study related only to teachers' chosen professional learning goals. The focus was no longer on all eight teaching standards. I felt the accountability purpose of appraisals had, been fulfilled by identifying teachers' performance through the initial observations, walk-

thoughts, their own self-assessments and the initial interview. My increased interaction with teachers as a result of the interviews provided me with rich additional insight into teachers' practice.

A structured approach to observations focusing on using the eight teaching standards as pre-determined criteria, and a checklist were considered and rejected as I felt this would have imposed observation criteria on the classroom contexts instead of observing what was naturally occurring. The observations proved to be an important part of the study and enriched my understanding of the ways teachers were working to improve their practice and achieve their goals. I valued seeing what was happening in classroom contexts rather than relying on oral accounts and explanations.

Unfortunately, observations are subject to similar criticisms as interviews regarding the reliability and validity of the evidence and findings they generate. Common concerns relate to the potential for observers to be subjective, biased or impressionistic in what they notice, for their judgments to be affected by close involvement with subjects, or the potential presence of the observer to result in 'different' rather than 'usual' behaviours. I felt increased interaction lead to more usual than greatly usual behaviours on the part of teachers and students, which helped the validity and reliability of the observation data.

#### **5.11.4 Instructional Rounds**

Many appraisal processes include the provision of a teaching standard, indicator or expectation that colleagues will work collaboratively together in the pursuit of improved student learning. An Instructional Rounds protocol was incorporated into the design of the study to explore if and how individual teacher and collegial learning might be supported by the inclusion of this formal collaborative structure linked to appraisal. (Appendix K)

#### **Focus group interview**

Upon completion of the Instructional Rounds a focus group interview was conducted with the four participants to debrief on the Rounds Process. Strategies adapted from Roberts (2012), City et al. (2009) detailed below were used to structure the debrief session. Prior to the debrief meeting, teachers had individually completed a short reflection using the same questions, this gave them time to consider their responses before sharing with colleagues.

**Debrief structure/teacher reflection**

What do you think you've learned through this process?

How do you understand student learning through this process?

What challenges did you encounter?

What difference does sticking to evidence make to your conversations about student learning?

In the light of the data, what would be reasonable for you/for us to do to support our professional learning in support of student learning?

Cohen et al. (2000) highlight a uniqueness attributed to focus group interviews is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data. Participants they caution must however feel comfortable to share their thoughts and opinions and be free from the impact of any possible negative groupthink.

**5.12 Data Analysis**

Jones and Jones (2013) in a study on teaching reflective practice to trainee teachers illustrate how an inductive analytic process proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) effectively supports the analysis of qualitative data. Inductive analysis Jones and Jones (ibid. p. 77) hold "is an attempt to understand the reality of a situation by creating comprehensive, logical theories and classifications from a body of evidence." "In reflective action between the data and researcher" (Cohen et al. 2000, p 282) the interpretation of a social reality emerges. The challenge the researchers highlight is to maintain a holistic sense of the unfolding situation and to avoid data being fragmented. Miles and Huberman (1993) describe generalized stages for generating meaning from qualitative data. In their study, Jones and Jones (2013) describe a recursive process based on the work of Goetz and Le Compte (1981) of "scanning qualitative data, to identify categories, and attributes, followed by additional scanning of the data for other examples of categories then creating typologies for categories (2013, p. 77) with the recursive process of data collection and data analysis repeated until typologies emerge and all data sources are incorporated into the study. This broadly mirrors the approach I adopted to generate a systematic approach to data analysis using the multiple data sources gathered within my study. Through a recursive process the first level of analysis was generated by scanning data from teachers' self-assessments and initial interviews as soon as each interview was complete. I reviewed, sorted and began reflecting on the data looking for initial words, ideas, and pieces of data. Effort was made to retain the

words participants used during interviews and on-self reflections. The second level of analysis consisted of looking for links and connections between groupings until categories formed. I then looked for examples of the categories and discrepant cases. The process was twice repeated as each layer of data from interim interviews, and observations added to the creation of an understanding of participants, of their practice and their connections to each other. The process in respect of Rachel and collective themes that emerged between individual participants who were actively engaged in the process is illustrated in Appendix E. The themes related to the IB PYP and capacity building includes all participant data. Emergent themes are discussed in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 6 Analysis for Phase 2**

### **6.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore and examine how teacher appraisal might be effectively restructured and operationalized to function as a viable agent for substantive continuing professional learning and development at the individual teacher and school level.

Phase 1 of the study necessitated the development of an appraisal tool and process that would be used throughout the study to implement appraisals and explore the research aims outlined above. This chapter presents the findings, analysis and interpretation of phase 2, the empirical focus of the inquiry. Data are presented in the form of three vignettes detailing participants' journeys though and experiences with the appraisal system. Findings are based on participants' self-assessments, preliminary and interim interviews, classroom observations, a group focus interview and participant reflections on Instructional Rounds. The chapter focuses on addressing the major areas of interest and issues embedded in the research questions:

How can teachers and principals in IB PYP schools become more actively involved in an appraisal system that focuses on professional development and systematic learning?

How might appraisal be effectively operationalized as a professional development tool at the school level to support on-going teacher development in implementing the standards and practices of the IB PYP?

Findings are presented and discussed based on how the appraisal system can contribute to: (1) professional learning and development at the individual teacher level, (2) professional learning related specifically to teachers' implementation of the standards and practices of the IB PYP and (3) the ability of the appraisal process to contribute to professional learning and development at the school level.

### **6.2 Data analysis process**

During the initial analysis, effort was made to apply and retain the words participants' used during the different stages of the study. Data from the sources listed above,

together with their possible interpretation formed the first level of analysis. The second level involved looking for links between and combining topics and issues that emerged from the first level and consistently re-examining data to ensure that participants' responses matched the second level of broader organizing concepts I created. Emerging themes were derived from overarching concepts linking topics and issues within the data sets. Table 6 provides details of the main themes that emerged related to each area of interest in the research questions. One teacher's engagement with the appraisal process, for reasons that will be discussed later, is treated as a discrete case later in this chapter.

### **6.2.1 Use of Fullan's framework for change in data analysis and interpretation**

My knowledge of Fullan's change theory was informed by my literature review, but faithful implementation of the framework to guide the appraisal process was not my goal. I did not rigorously analyse the initial stages of the research data using the framework. The framework informed the study as it influenced my thinking by alerting me to ideas and concepts that could prove helpful in carrying out appraisals. For example, I explicitly tried to suspend the judgmentalism most often associated with summative assessments and strove to adopt Fullan's foundational strategy of Love your Employees. Thus I adopted a more formative approach to appraisals and explicitly sought ways to support teachers' professional learning needs. Fullan's change strategies in particular: connecting peers with purpose, focusing efforts on capacity building, encouraging job-embedded learning and adopting a whole-school systems focus were influential in how I approached appraisals. I used opportunities when they arose naturally during appraisals to consider and often explicitly include these constructs. Also, once I had analysed the data and identified emerging themes, I used Fullan's theory as a frame of reference to consider, interpret and reflect on the themes. I was interested to see if and how the emerging themes would relate to Fullan's framework and if Fullan's framework could successfully inform and support the changeover to the new appraisal system. My analysis indicated that Fullan's specific strategies listed above were significant in conducting successful appraisals. The specific strategies most pertinent to the emergent themes are discussed under the relevant themes in the following sections.

Emerging from my literature review, I also found Johnson's (2012) perspective that appraisals need to take into account the influence of individual teachers, teaching teams and the contextual features of the schools in which teachers' work to be a persuasive argument. Incorporating Johnson's work meant I explicitly sought to include a focus on

individual teachers, their teaching teams and school-wide initiatives in carrying out, analysing and reflecting on appraisals.

**Table 6 Emergent themes from the data**

<b>Opportunities to support professional learning at the individual teacher level</b>	<b>Opportunities to support implementation of the IB PYP</b>	<b>Opportunities to support capacity building at the school level</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for specifically targeted professional learning and development</li> <li>• Appraisal process contributes to the development of a learning culture within the school</li> <li>• The appraisal process activates individual initiative</li> <li>• Teacher growth mindset and reflective practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of Instructional Leadership related to teachers' specific needs</li> <li>• The need to consolidate and sustain use of key elements of the IB PYP</li> <li>• The need to continually refine, expand and reflect on PYP practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to link peers to provide specific continuing professional development</li> <li>• Identification of teachers who can contribute to capacity building at the school level</li> <li>• Increased leader knowledge of how the system is operating and how it might be improved</li> </ul>

### **6.3 Participants**

I began the study with four individual participants, Rachel, Harry, Mark, and Ellen. Due to word constraints on the thesis, data from only three participants is reported at the individual level. To maintain and incorporate a focus on two teaching teams, however, the involvement of Ellen, the fourth participant, is included in the Instructional Rounds analysis in the following chapter.

Analysis of the data gathered revealed two distinct conceptual groupings of participants in regard to their engagement with the process. Rachel and Harry comprise one group; their participation can reasonably be characterized as one of engagement and involvement. Mark's participation might be described as more measured compliance than active or interested engagement. His involvement for these reasons is treated as a discrete case and discussed later in this chapter.

## **6.4 Supporting professional learning at the individual teacher level during appraisals**

The following themes on individual teacher professional learning and development emerged as significant during the appraisal process:

- Opportunities arise for specifically targeted professional learning and development
- The appraisal process contributes to the development of a learning culture within the school
- The appraisal process activates individual initiatives
- The process highlights teacher growth mindset and reflective practice

### **6.4.1 Opportunities for specifically targeted professional learning and development**

During appraisal discussions teachers readily identified and provided details of practice they particularly wished to focus on. Therefore, cognizant of their goals and familiar with their struggles, I could target and provide specific support for them in these areas of pedagogy. In relation to standard 2, indicator 4 (see Appendix D, pp. 183-184) Rachel shared that she was struggling to develop a system to assess, manage and track data related to student vocabulary acquisition. She commented:

I'd like to find a way to become better at managing the use of vocabulary and rather know that they've internalized it... I don't know, I feel the word work happens so fast that sometimes seeing how they're developing their vocabulary and if it's growing and how to go about assessing, it's a challenge.

I facilitated a short meeting between Rachel and a colleague with a proven prior track record in vocabulary development and suggested Rachel might observe his practice. Rachel's colleague offered a more supportive suggestion, to teach a vocabulary lesson with Rachel's students. Over a series of lessons, using examples from his students, he showed Rachel's students how to create informational videos using iPads and a particular Doodlecast application, which included a definition, illustration, sample



sentences and student recordings exemplifying how the target vocabulary might be used.

Additionally, during these lessons this teacher asked students to identify the characteristics of effective informational videos. This process provided Rachel with a model of how a rubric and checklist could be co-constructed using criteria generated with students, thus providing modelled support for another of her goals, which she articulated as, “I need to co-construct and generate rubrics with students to enable them explicitly understand and better work towards learning objectives.” (Standard 1, Indicator 1, Appendix D, p.182)

Rachel’s positive acceptance of the learning opportunities presented illustrates the value of leaders expressly adopting Fullan’s foundational change strategy; Love your Employees. It emphasizes the importance of leaders deliberately investing in supporting employees development and enabling achievement. Similarly, Fullan’s contention that leaders need to create conditions so teachers’ can meet their own goals and increase their skills appears significant. Rachel had ownership in identifying her goals and was invested in following through to achieve them.

In relation to standard 7, indicator 4, (Appendix D, p.189) Rachel also articulated:

I feel like [names a colleague] does so many really great things with his students with technology and online and my kids know a lot from him last year...because I kind of don't want them to forget everything they learned in his room, but I feel like oh no, they have all of these skills and I just want to be able to like reinforce it, like keep it going.

The on-going cumulative nature of these shared experiences provided Rachel with strategies to enhance vocabulary acquisition, supported her use of ICT, and provided her with a modelled example of how success criteria and assessments could be generated with students. This highlights the real advantage of teachers learning from each other to move systems forward. These developments illustrate the power of Fullan’s strategy of connecting peers with purpose. In complex situations such as teaching, Fullan argues, purposeful work with peers has potentially greater impact than individual work as information and knowledge about effective practices are more widely and openly shared. This perspective is reinforced by the OECD Teaching and Learning Survey (TALIS, 2008, 2013), which found that a focus on learning, reflection, de-privatization of practice and collaborative activities in teachers’ schools provided more

interactive and personalized support than workshops and seminars. Importantly, they were also well received by teachers.

A particular type of leadership, however, Fullan contends, is crucial for creating the structures and guidance needed to sustain and ensure that peer interactions are productive. Fullan (2008, p. 45) calls for what he identifies as 'tight-loose systems'. Here leaders provide the monitoring mechanics and "intervene along the way to identify, support and consolidate effective practices" and yet avoid micro managing interactions so peers are free to connect based on similar interests and to share knowledge and skills. Given these circumstances, Fullan argues, "Knowledge flows as people pursue and continuously learn what works best." Fullan cautions, however that peer interactions are not automatically always good and warns leaders to be aware of the possibility of the close-mindedness of group-think, where rather than critically evaluating information, teachers may quickly form opinions in a drive to reach a shared consensus. The influence and value of a 'tight-loose' structure can be seen in interactions between Rachel and her colleague. I identified the initial focus and parameters for this peer sharing, was invested and kept aware of on-going developments yet Rachel and her colleague expanded and sustained the initiative.

These targeted learning opportunities were provided in situ. This approach harboured great potential to enhance and refine Rachel's practice as it directly addressed her specific professional learning needs in the context in which they would be applied. This stands in contrast to providing Rachel with generic resources related to these topics or recommended attendance at a workshop or conference. The latter approach may or may not have resulted in enhanced practice, as Rachel might have been required to navigate application and tailor the learning to her own specific teaching environment. The relevance of Fullan's strategy of job-embedded learning is illustrated here. Fullan (ibid. p. 88) argues, "workshops and conferences are useful inputs which at best result in superficial learning". To support improvement leaders need to focus on building cultures where learning is happening everyday within organizations.

This argument is mirrored by results from the TALIS (2014, p. 4) report. It highlights a significant, positive association of teacher-reported impacts on teaching knowledge and practice from school-embedded as opposed to non-job embedded professional development. Non-job embedded professional development had a significant negative association with impact on these areas, yet 65% of participants reported participating in workshops or seminar-type professional development as opposed to only 34% reporting

participation in activities that included reflection, observations and collaborative activities with teachers in their school.

A discussion with Harry revealed a desire to focus on student learning goals.  
(See Standard 6, Indicators 3 and 4, Appendix B)

He could clearly and confidently articulate what he wanted to achieve and the strategies he planned to use, perhaps as a result of having greater teaching experience than Rachel. Nonetheless, there were opportunities to support Harry's professional learning. Purchasing resources and sharing the school's code in an on-line professional learning site, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), enabled Harry to freely access and choose articles on student learning goals. During the Instructional Rounds observations Harry identified an additional interest in learning strategies to engage reluctant learners. This was an area the school counsellor could support. This case also illustrates the importance of Fullan's (2008) foundational strategy, Love your Employees, which stresses leaders' need to have a deep commitment to providing the conditions for teachers to succeed.

As well as providing the opportunity to support teachers' growth in areas where they'd identified specific needs, the appraisal process offered the chance to acknowledge teachers' current practice. Based on a classroom observation in Harry's room we discussed the variety of instructional strategies he'd used to elicit student engagement in class discussion. In response to this feedback related to standard 5, indicators, 1, 2 and 4 (Appendix 2) Harry responded:

I try, It's nice you noticed the strategies; students names on the popsicle sticks, students nominating the next speaker, turn and talk partners with the listener feeding back to the group...yea, you're right getting students to face the speaker is no mean feat, it doesn't happen by accident, thanks.

Harry's expression of thanks would seem to concur with findings generated from the OECD's TALIS report (2012) that recognition from principals is valued by teachers and can stimulate increased feelings of satisfaction about their job, with feedback on innovated teaching practices likely to result in high levels of self efficacy. The report also notes that three-quarters of teachers across TALIS countries expressed a moderate or

large increase in confidence after receiving feedback on their work, while 62% report that it resulted in positive changes in their teaching practices.

The appraisal process also offered Rachel a chance to refine and build on her current practice. In relation to Student Learning and Achievement (Standard 1, Indicator 1, Appendix 2) Rachel articulated: “I need to start posting Learning Intentions in the room in order for the class to have an explicit idea of what they are learning.”

While the explicit use of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria was a school-wide goal, Rachel had not yet adopted the terminology in her classroom. During observations of her lessons, however, particularly one on biographies, it was clearly apparent that she was already verbally providing students with Learning Intentions:

Readers form opinions about people in biographies based on evidence from the text so they can discuss their opinions with others.  
Today, when you're reading your biography, you're going to be thinking about your opinions, about what from the book, is helping you think that way about the character.

Anchor charts Rachel had created also illustrated a clear build-up of objectives in relation to the structure, purpose and text features of biographies. The focus of each mini-lesson was recorded in different-coloured text. It would require only minimum effort to restructure these into explicit written Learning Intentions and Success Criteria and for Rachel to begin explicitly using the terminology with students.

In response to this feedback Rachel replied, “Oh, that’s good, I hadn’t thought about it in that way, that link, I can do that, it’s easier to think about writing Learning Intentions if I just think of them this way.”

A shared, more refined, in-depth understanding of teachers’ learning needs surfaced during appraisals. This enabled me to target support for these areas of practice.

#### **6.4.2 Contribution to a learning culture within the school**

The exploratory open nature of joint discussions during interviews, follow-on conversations after observations and informal visits to teachers’ classrooms to follow up on ideas and/or share resources related to their learning goals contributed to better relationships with teachers. Instances of laughter and talking over each other to

elaborate and build shared understanding of practice are documented in recordings. These on-going conversations appeared to create the sense of a collaborative commitment to supporting teachers' work.

Educational discourse of this nature, rooted in exploring challenges and issues with a view to addressing them is indicative of a contribution to the development of a learning culture. This is directly in opposition to a more traditional accountability-driven summative approach to appraisal, which aims to ensure that practice in relation to standards is firmly in place. The latter approach may entail a related judgmental inquiry linked to teacher capabilities about why this might not be the case.

Opportunities also freely arose to establish and share with teachers a perspective that everyone within the school, including the principal, has a responsibility to be involved in continuing professional learning. In my own words,

I'm going to do it myself, observe in Ellen's room, she's allocated students 15 minutes daily to actually work on their goals, designated a separate and specific time. I'd like to see how and if this approach works or if work on goals needs to be incorporated into the times students are actually working on that curriculum area.

Conversations also afforded the opportunity to recount and share practices observed in other classrooms. In my own words,

Grade 1 has a great system, where goals are visible on desks in the form of a star mounted on a chopstick and the girls add stickers once a goal is achieved. The counsellor has a good tracking system related to behavioural goals that's worth a look.

By the interim appraisal phase, few instances of explicitly promoting, explaining or reiterating a commitment to on-going professional learning were noted during discussions. This was no longer needed as the teachers were already actively pursuing professional learning. Instead, conversations centered on very pragmatic efforts to support teachers' practice and involved teachers' discussing their own efforts. The process itself was promoting an expectation of learning linked to appraisal.

Fullan's strategy of Capacity Building Prevails is particularly pertinent to this emergent theme. I believe the teachers were feeling that their efforts were valued and their interactions, either with a colleague or myself, were resulting in new knowledge and commitment. Fullan argues that once you have this type of learning happening on the job, there is a greater potential to develop "a critical mass of organizational colleagues who are indeed learners" (Fullan, 2008, p. 10).

#### **6.4.3 The appraisal process activates individual initiatives**

In addition to the collaborative work carried out by teachers in supporting each other's learning and my own deliberate efforts to assisting teachers, I also saw individual initiative. As well as working on their chosen professional learning goals, teachers also extended their efforts. For example, I recorded this reflection:

Rachel, seeking to provide students with a regular systematic approach to vocabulary development, expanded her initiative beyond working with a colleague and incorporated the use of a website. She reported the following:

I started using a vocabulary website called Flowabulary and it's hilarious, it has rap songs, hip-hop, a video, read a story ...each night they do a different activity...then on Monday, I give them a little quiz. I keep the vocabulary on the board like in [names colleague's] class and they're already coming forward saying "look, I found it in a book, I found it in this..."

Appraisal discussions and the continuing sustained focus of working with a colleague, it is argued, helped Rachel sustain her work in this curricular area.

Rachel's colleague also offered to share his ICT practice with individual colleagues and at faculty meetings. His level of involvement surprised me. He dropped by my office on three occasions to invite me to observe his lessons with Rachel's students. Rachel suggested she get involved in helping orient new teachers: "Some teachers were talking about 'Words Their Way,' (a word study program introduced into the school). That's one area maybe next year, I could introduce to new teachers who haven't used it."

These actions led me to believe that collaborative experiences were helping teachers gain greater confidence and motivation to share their practice, knowledge and skills with colleagues. They appeared to have developed a better sense that their efforts and initiatives would be appreciated and valued.

Again, Fullan's strategy of purposeful peer interaction is illustrated here. He claims that (2008, p. 49), these interactions can result in what he terms a 'we-we solution' evidenced by peers "rallying around a higher purpose that has meaning for individuals as well as for the collectivity." Teachers feeling their efforts valued, Fullan argues, expands the self with powerful consequences.

#### **6.4.4 Teacher growth mindset and reflective practice**

What was obvious from conversations and interactions with Rachel and Harry was their interest in and commitment to their practice. This attitude and seemingly intrinsic motivation was doubtlessly a prominent factor contributing to these teachers' engagement in appraisals. The dialogue and actions shared by Harry below reflect what Dweck (2006) identifies as a growth mindset. A mindset she describes as being willing to stretch, try different strategies, persist until solutions are found and eventual mastery over challenges is achieved. This type of growth mindset is based on the belief that improvement is cultivated through the application of effort. Harry shared:

I'd like to monitor growth goals more effectively by meeting more regularly with individual students, especially as writers and mathematics. They have goals on their desks, I meet with students during recess, I'm monitoring the use of Biblionamium, (an on-line Reading Log) to see students are achieving reading goals. I think in writing, there's a need for continually conferencing with students and refining the goals. Okay, maybe I want to add in monitor goals as readers too now. (Writes this idea on his self-reflection during the interview).

Rachel's active engagement with vocabulary and students' goal setting and her efforts to address her professional learning goals similarly identify her as having a growth mindset.

The actions and conversations of these teachers also reveal them as reflective practitioners. Their willingness and ability to examine their practice and act on the feedback and insights I shared was influential in their participation in appraisals. Harry's comments below, for example reflect those aspects of reflective thinking often associated with Dewey (1933, 1938 cited in Larrivee 2000, p. 294), which he describes as involving the "recognition of a problem or dilemma and the acceptance of uncertainty.

The dissonance created...engages the reflective thinker to become an active inquirer, involved both in the critique of current conclusions and the generation of new hypotheses.” Larrivee also highlights that “resulting decisions remain open to further scrutiny and reformulation.” Harry shared the following:

I’m trying to create a learning environment full of individual independent inquiries by putting routines in place that set up those expectations. My kids are working more independently and we’re getting a little bit closer. But, I had an insight the other day when I started re-reading Visible Learning. I think the reason independent projects are not working in mathematics is partly because I gave the kids a worksheet and had them think about the five math strands and look through their student reference book to find a part of math that they don’t know enough about to work on. I kind of think that maybe the problem is just that, ultimately, I think I need to provide them with more scaffolding and narrow their options so they can identify their next learning steps.

Larrivee’s (2000, p. 295) argument that “reflective practitioners develop the self-efficacy to create personal solutions to problems” seems reflective of both Rachel’s and Harry’s growth efforts.

## **6.5 Compliant rather than active engagement in appraisal**

Two observations in Mark’s classroom confirmed he has solid content and pedagogical content knowledge. For example, during a literacy lesson, he provided the following learning intentions to students: “Today, we’re going to look at the way authors use sentence fluency and how we can incorporate sentence fluency into our writing.”

He made effective use of questioning and probing to scaffold students’ analysis of the sentence construction of two high-quality literature excerpts and succinctly summarized the features students should heed to achieve fluency in their own writing. Mark also used a mix of instructional techniques in his lessons, whole class instruction, a think-pair-share strategy and independent practice. A pattern emerged during observations, however, of the same five students raising their hands to contribute to class discussions.

When I raised this with Mark during the interim appraisal discussion he responded:



They don't know how to build on each other's ideas. They don't know how to use each other as a learning resource. They don't know how to sustain and build on a discussion. They're not interested in doing it, not interested in going deeper

Yet from his self-assessment I could see that Mark was aware of limited student participation in discussion as he'd self-rated standard 2 indicator 1: uses a variety of instructional strategies and resources to encourage student engagement at the basic level. He recorded, "more work is needed to promote student engagement with each other." When offered a text named Total Participation Techniques (Himmele and Himmele, 2011), however, Mark responded, "Yea, maybe," yet, never followed up on the suggestion. He seemed reluctant to engage in discussion and to explore suggestions related to his practice.

Mark circulated during observations yet did not explicitly interact or connect with individual learners. On-going learning conversations or feedback between teacher and students were not evidenced. When I asked Mark if he had anecdotal records or documented conferencing with students so that he explicitly knew their accomplishments and could support their next learning steps in writing, he responded:

Some students probably didn't really set a goal for themselves, they just don't value goal-setting, they're not focused, they don't really care about their goal, or its not rewarding, or they don't really know what the goal really is and why they're doing it, it needs something more.

Mark also seemed aware that goal-setting with students was an area he needed to strengthen as he'd rated standard 6, indicators 3 and 4 student learning and growth goals as a basic level and recorded; "more work could be done to promote student goal-setting and tracking." As indicated by the discussion above however, Mark didn't indicate that he specifically planned to implement strategies to address this with students. Hattie (2012) highlights the importance of teachers' involvement with students in actively seeking and providing feedback and in monitoring current understanding and supporting progress towards learning objectives. He argues that to enable students to become self-directed, engaged and informed learners, teachers should provide feedback that enables students to answer three questions: "Where am I going? (What

are my goals?) How am I going? (What progress am I making towards my goals and Where to next? (What do I need to undertake next to make better progress?")

Also, while Mark had adopted the use of learning intentions to begin lessons, it seemed their use was almost routine. They seemed part of his planned lesson delivery, rather than being used to activate individual student motivation, investment or ownership in learning. In contrast Hattie (2012, p. 52) argues good use of learning intentions "make clear to the students the type or level of performance that they need to attain, so that they understand where and when to invest energies."

Additionally, while interactions between Mark and his students were positive, relaxed and friendly, these were at a personal level and relationships in classrooms need to go beyond this and be explicitly focused on the business of learning. Hattie (2012, p.29) argues that skilled practitioners are proficient at "creating an optimal classroom climate for learning. One where 'learning is cool,' worth engaging in, and everyone – teacher and students – is involved in the process of learning, one which requires commitment and investment of effort."

A picture of Mark emerged as a teacher who could deliver solid content and who had knowledge of a variety of pedagogical approaches but who needed to strengthen his learning conversations with students, and to provide them with individualized feedback and monitor their progress. He also needed to motivate all students to participate in discussions. Mark however was reluctant to discuss his practice, so trying to get him to productively engage with his appraisal felt a formidable challenge.

Cognizant of Fullan's change strategy of Love your Employees, which advocates that leaders should explicitly commit cognitively and emotionally to creating conditions for teachers to achieve, I realized I needed to suspend my own judgment. I should not regard Mark's unwillingness to engage as a vexing problem but rather strive to find ways to involve him in order to build his capacity. Fullan contends in situations such as these, negative monitoring, good-natured advice, pressure or punishment-based approaches fail to motivate change. His strategy of embracing transparency offered a possible driver to engage Mark in addressing his practice.

Transparency, Fullan (2008, p. 95) argues "involves being open about practices and is essentially an exercise in pursing and nailing down problems that recur and identifying evidence-informed response to them." Fullan regards it as neither acceptable nor useful

not to address challenges and argues leaders must identify, locate and correct weaknesses so the total system becomes stronger. Fullan contends that transparency can be used simultaneously for both accountability and improvement. Fortunately, a summative accountability and formative professional development focus was inbuilt into the appraisal process. Mark would be required to focus on and document his involvement and success with the standards related to student engagement, assessment and goal setting as part of his next appraisal as these were rated at a basic or unsatisfactory level. (See Appendix C for options to document evidence in work in this area). Mark's involvement in Instructional Rounds detailed in the following chapter also illustrated a useful strategy that could be used to encourage him to engage in reflection and refinement of his practice, it emerged that he was more comfortable with peer analysis of his practice than with my involvement as a leader. Leadership and the appraisal process could provide the accountability needed, but working with his peers was more likely to motivate him to refine his practice.

Further discussion of Mark's participation is included in the analysis of teachers' involvement in appraisals at the end of this chapter.

We next consider ways that emerged during appraisals to support teachers' implementation of PYP practices.

## **6.6 Professional learning and development specifically related to teachers' implementation of the standards and practices of the IB PYP**

As the study was located in a PYP school, the inquiry offered the opportunity to examine teachers' learning needs related to key aspects of the program and explore how these might best be supported. Discussions with teachers and classroom observations focused particularly on teachers' use of (1) the key concepts, (2) an inquiry cycle to guide teaching and learning, (3) transdisciplinary skills and (4) the IB Learner Profile. A brief description of each of these elements is provided in Table 7 for readers unfamiliar with the PYP. We refer to these concepts in the subsequent discussion of teachers' practice.

**Table 7 Key elements of PYP practice**

<b>Key PYP element</b>	<b>Purpose/role</b>	<b>Organizing structure</b>
Key concepts	The IB mandates use of 8 core key concepts expressed as guiding questions to structure learning experiences in all core subject areas	What is it like? (Form) How does it work? (Function) Why is it like it is? (Causation) How is it changing? (Change) How is it connected to other things? (Connection) What are the points of view? (Perspective) What is our responsibility? (Responsibility) How do we know? (Reflection)
Inquiry	Inquiry as the leading pedagogical approach of the PYP is recognized as encouraging students to be actively involved in their own learning and to take responsibility for that learning.	Pedagogy involves explicit use of an inquiry cycle so students understand where they are and next steps in the inquiry process in relation to their learning journey.
The IB Learner Profile	Explicit use of the IB Learner Profile during teaching and learning is required so students understand and aspire to growth in these attributes as their ultimate learning objective.	The profile supports students in their development as: Inquirers, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled, Open-Minded, Caring, Risk-taking, Balanced, Reflective and Knowledgeable individuals.
Transdisciplinary Skills	An explicit commitment to the development and engagement with a set of transdisciplinary skills is a cornerstone of PYP classroom practice.	Transdisciplinary skills comprise Communication, Thinking, Social and Self-management skills

The data analysis identified two conceptual teacher groupings with respect to support needed for IB PYP practice. Unsurprisingly, Rachel, who was newer to the program needed greater support, while reinforcement to sustain use of these key practices emerged as an issue with Harry and Mark.

The following themes emerged as significant during appraisals related to actively supporting IB PYP practice:

- The provision of Instructional Leadership related to teachers' specific needs
- The need to consolidate and sustain the use of the IB PYP's key elements
- The need to continually refine, expand and reflect on PYP practice

#### **6.6.1 Providing instructional leadership related to teachers' specific needs**

Rachel was an experienced teacher; she had attended an official IB PYP professional development workshop and had one year's prior experience with the program. Yet, she identified essential elements of the IB PYP she was clearly struggling to implement:

"I'd like to become more experienced with using the PYP terminology and the inquiry process; the different stages of the inquiry cycle so it can be used seamlessly by me and the students, so its more visible and so students understand what they're doing and where they're at in the inquiry process."

Rachel also identified a challenge incorporating an explicit focus on the transdisciplinary skills:

I'm kinda finding out that the only time we talk about skills, its isolated...I have a list of all the skills on the wall, that's helpful, but yeah, it's not embedded, the language, it's just not happening. I'm just not explicitly using these skills effectively with students.

Additionally, no reference or inclusion of the IB Learner profile was observed during Rachel's lessons and at the interim stage of the study, although the inquiry cycle was evident on her board, it was not explicitly used in her lessons.

Based on the struggles Rachel articulated, classroom observations, and my professional judgment, it was clear Rachel needed greater support to engage students in these practices. It was important for parity of student learning experiences, program

sustainability and progression through the grades that Rachel receives this support. I discussed with and provided the following strategies for Rachel:

1. I provided links to websites of known inquiry-based consultants Rachel could view to see the different stages of inquiry-based methodology in action together with key texts related to inquiry based strategies.
2. I suggested specific pragmatic actions Rachel could try such as placing a post-it or star in her planning book to remind herself to incorporate these key elements, having a daily goal to refer explicitly to these elements when teaching, and scripting key lessons to deliberately incorporate the key components.
3. I offered to team-teach lessons in Rachel's classroom with the PYP coordinator during her next unit. We discussed the need for deliberate practice over perhaps a 6-month period followed by reflection on her growth and continuing challenges.

Fullan (2012, p. 69 citing research by Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004) highlights the importance of this type of involved leadership in teaching and learning when he argues that "school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on learning. Data from the OECD TALIS report (2013) also supports the argument that strong leadership can greatly facilitate school improvement. A very high proportion (76%) of participant principals reported frequently engaging in activities consistent with instructional leadership, focused on ensuring teachers feel responsible for student outcomes and 69% said they were involved in helping teachers improve teaching skills. At the same time, leaders also reported that they devoted 41% of their time to administrative tasks and meetings. Clearly finding time to focus on intense instructional leadership is a challenge. Linked to this is also data (TALIS, 2013) that illustrates a substantive proportion of principals (75%) do not receive specific preparation to take on this role. Continuing professional development for principals and finding time to carry out this work is obviously important for school improvement.

Rachel was open to and articulated she valued the idea of modelled team-taught lessons in which she herself would participate when she said, "Okay, we could do a three-teacher lesson, great."

Afterwards Rachel shared:

Today, we did an activity and I asked, do you remember the concepts guiding this unit? Half of the class remembered, that usually takes me the whole unit. It's the end of the unit and they're like what were the

concepts, but it just stuck, the lesson you did with them really stuck, with them being able to name the concepts they must have learned them.

This interaction would seem to illustrate that teachers value collaborative involvement and feedback from principals (TALIS, 2013).

The appraisal process alerted me to the need and provided me with the context to target support for Rachel. It also offered the opportunity to acknowledge Rachel's growth in the program. Being able to articulate and identify where she needed support was a huge step forward. Previously Rachel struggled to understand how the central elements of the program fit together. Effort involved in implementing the PYP can initially be overwhelming for some teachers (See Twigg 2009). Fullan's (2008) identifies principals' influence and continual explicit support as key factors affecting the implementation and continuation of programs. Huberman and Miles (1984) with a similar perspective emphasize the importance of explicit efforts to support the continuation or institutionalization of innovations. Datnow and Stringfield (2000) refer to efforts needed to manage and ensure the longevity of reform efforts.

#### **6.6.2 The need to consolidate and sustain the use of key IB PYP elements**

From the appraisal tool, particularly standard 4, indicators 2 and 3; standard 8, indicator 4; and the regular meetings, discussions and associated classroom observations I gained a better understanding of Rachel's struggle to embed aspects of the IB PYP. I also became knowledgeable about the need for Harry and Mark to sustain use of these practices. Fullan (2008) using research by Hargreaves and Fink (2006) coins the term 'unplanned discontinuity' to explain challenges in principal succession. This concept of 'unplanned discontinuity' appears equally relevant to what the appraisal process revealed was happening with the implementation of key elements of the PYP. For example, while Harry made some references to the IB Learner Profile, key concepts, and communication skills during lesson observations, there were multiple other opportunities to incorporate and enhance their use. Responding to this feedback Harry observed: "I do use them, but yea, you're right, I should probably include them some more, good reminder."

Mark rated his implementation of these key elements at a proficient level but no instances of the explicit use of or reference to these constructs were observed during his lessons. Perhaps in self-assessing his practice, Mark based his indicator on his

understanding and familiarity with the concepts rather than his actual implementation of the core practices.

A number of specific strategies Fullan advocates have particular relevance for strengthening and helping sustain these practices. Learning is the Work is a prime example. The PYP coordinator could easily create opportunities in regular faculty meetings for teachers to share ideas and implementation strategies for PYP core elements. There were opportunities for job-embedded learning in situ as well. Connecting Peers with Purpose in a tight-loose system, leadership could organize and schedule meetings, exert sustained gentle pressure and hold teachers accountable for participating and contributing. Teachers would still be free to continue to share ideas and implementation strategies among themselves. This would enhance the possibility of effective practices being more widely spread among classrooms. Fullan (2008) advises leaders to try to reconcile dilemmas at the systems level as they have a better chance of building a robust set of interrelated practices and the greater possibility of getting more implementation by doing so than by focusing their efforts solely on individual teachers. Without this focus the staying power and initial success of innovations are compromised.

### **6.6.3 The need to continually refine, expand and reflect on PYP practice**

Harry raised a particular concern about the use of student learning data. The PYP coordinator required teachers to bring samples of student learning to weekly planning meetings. Harry argued that there were “too many learning objectives” with me during his interim interview and used a red highlighter on his self-assessment over this text: “PYP, Math – list of objectives – I do find a tension, TOO BIG a tension, in trying to find a piece of work for the learning objectives for each meeting, its activity to the test.” He observed the following:

I can't produce that many pieces of work in one unit it's just impossible, every learning engagement can't end in a product. I don't know how to describe it; trying to produce a piece of work for every objective, I don't necessarily think it's a good thing. It's almost like you're teaching to the test except it's activity to the test. And I feel that tension happening. When we take the assessment workshops, there are other kinds of assessments besides products that can be shown.

I was talking to Rachel about it; she said their workshop instructor's answer was that if you're trying to hit evidence for that many



objectives you might end up doing less deep learning and that's the tension I feel. I feel like a monkey because we are so busy trying to figure out how to get a piece of evidence.

Harry's challenge and frustration about the number of learning objectives alerted me to a situation I was previously unaware of and meant I could discuss the issue with the PYP coordinator. Professional discussion with the faculty about a viable and guaranteed curriculum in terms of the optimal number of learning objectives and the number and type of student work samples that would demonstrate and support analysis of student learning outcomes could be planned for. Fullan (2012, p. 70) argues that "consistency and innovation can and must go together, and you achieve them through organized learning in context." Harry's concerns made me aware of the need to be consistent in gathering evidence of student learning, but they indicated that it was perhaps time to examine and refine our practices and innovate to provide better guidance for teachers for collecting assessment data.

### **6.7 Ability of the appraisal process to contribute to professional learning and development at the school level**

Analysis of the appraisal processes' ability to contribute to school level development comes from two separate sources, (1) a combined analysis of teachers' individual appraisal processes and (2) data from the implementation of Instructional Rounds, the peer observation protocol introduced to realize a collaborative team-based approach to professional learning through appraisal. The following themes emerged as being significant in capacity building:

- Opportunities to link peers to provide specific continuing professional development
- Identification of teachers who can contribute to capacity building at the school level
- Increased leader knowledge of how the system is operating and how it might be improved

The next chapter discusses Instructional Rounds' contribution to capacity building.

### **6.7.1 Opportunities to link peers to provide specific, on-going development**

As previously documented, substantive opportunities emerged to link peers in collaborative work. These connections resulted in the following benefits: teachers' growth in use of ICT, assessment strategies, vocabulary acquisition, student goal-setting, anchor charts for literacy development and growth in teachers' self-efficacy. These are examples of benefits to the teachers and the school where the study was done. However, specifically planning to support individual teachers, identifying opportunities to connect peers in a tight-loose system of involved leadership where teachers are encouraged to share their knowledge and practices and adopting a systems perspective would be beneficial in other settings too. While the specific results would differ, the process and strategies can be transferred and could prove helpful to principals in other contexts who want to change their appraisal processes.

### **6.7.2 Identification of teachers who can contribute to capacity building at the school level**

It was evident from classroom observations and discussions that both Harry and Rachel had much to contribute to capacity building at the school. They had effective subject knowledge and a variety of pedagogical skills they could share and model for colleagues. Their growth mindsets, commitment and reflection in addressing problems of practice identified them as obvious candidates capable of contributing to and perhaps leading improvement initiatives. Three examples emerged as significant:

Firstly, Harry demonstrated willingness, as detailed previously, to question and inquire into his practice and efforts to refine his pedagogy through the planned application of new strategies. This identifies him as a candidate to help lead inquiry into pedagogy at the school. The real objective of Instructional Rounds was just this, to examine how continuity and progression in literacy could be achieved and how teachers might build on each other's practice in the service of greater regularity of student learning experiences in literacy. Finding that Harry had the skills to support this planned pedagogical inquiry was significant. This discovery pertains to Fullan's (2008, p. 118) strategy for improving systems where he argues that, "effective leaders must learn when and how to get out of the way, and let others make contributions". Helping develop other leaders increases the likelihood for enhanced continuity and sustained beneficial direction.

Secondly, Rachel's work with vocabulary could frame an inquiry into vocabulary acquisition and assessment. This held the potential to be of substantive use for

continuing professional development on two levels: (1) all teachers in IB PYP schools are considered teachers of language and so need to engage explicitly in vocabulary acquisition regardless of the discipline (standard 2, indicator 4 explicitly addresses vocabulary acquisition) and (2) in common with many international schools students' standardized scores for vocabulary were lower than scores in other areas of the curriculum.

Thirdly, Rachel's struggle and commitment to better manage students' engagement and progress with learning goals proved significant. As she articulated:

After they revisit assignments, I'd like to come up with a system for keeping track of goals and later, just trying to organize them, I just feel, I don't want them downing in goals, trying to figure out a way to keep goals relevant and purposeful, and for the kids be able to track and reflect on them. I want the goals to become something they're actually working towards achieving.

Offered the opportunity to help investigate an appropriate E-platform to house and track student data, Rachel jumped at the chance and accompanied me on a fact-finding visit to a neighbouring international school:

Oh, yeah, yeah, great, yeah, I'd like that and if we had that in place it would make life easier. Yeah, just knowing the students' reading level, their math level, their goals and having everything available in one place would be great.

These examples illustrate Fullan's (2008, p. 71) assertion for the need for leaders to "seek people who are not only individually talented but also *system* talented". These teachers have the potential to collaborate and learn on the job both individually and with others. Fullan notes, however, that leadership behaviours have a role to play in developing this type of investment and involvement from teachers. Leaders need to provide support and enriching experiences that increase the likelihood of teachers developing the motivation and feelings of being valued that lead to their developing a collective commitment toward improvement efforts.

The inquiry also revealed that the nature, structure and type of teachers' involvement in this type of distributed leadership are important in maximizing capacity building. For

example, Harry had self-assessed his collaboration with colleagues to enhance teaching and learning as distinguished. Upon reflection however, I realized that at a formal level, at least, this had been limited to working with the PYP coordinator to strengthen the written curriculum. The appraisal process spurred me to realize that Harry's capabilities were being underutilized and illustrated a need to schedule release time for Harry to share his competencies and strategies with others in planning sessions and in classrooms.

My experiences with Mark highlighted that the type of support and monitoring that leaders provide to raise teachers' involvement in capacity building is also influential. I requested that Mark, as one of the leaders of innovation in mathematics, run a trial implementation of the new PYP planning structure, which consisted of constructing meaning (involving the use of manipulatives, models, diagrams), transferring meaning (involving the use of symbols, pen and paper, devices) and applying with understanding (involving the use of independent practice and challenge). He rejected the request in the following terms:

Well, I'm not explicitly talking in that language, it's not what I'm going though in class, basically because I think students know they're applying their understanding, I'm not explicitly going through this type of learning cycle or following the steps. No, I don't plan learning that way. My focus is sharing learning intentions with students.

As this planning structure was soon to be a required program standard and three grades were already involved in using it, Mark's unwillingness to engage in it was worrying with respect to his involvement in distributed leadership for mathematics. It illustrated that I needed to intervene as collaboration risked developing somewhat in its weaker forms for example, exchanging ideas, offering help and assistance when asked, sharing materials and teaching strategies instead of attaining a higher level of joint work where teachers plan and inquire into teaching together (Warren Little, 1990).

### **6.7.3 Increase leader knowledge of how the system is operating and how it might be improved**

Engaging with teachers during the appraisal process, I received more detailed knowledge about how a number of different aspects of the school system were operating. For example, I came to understand precisely how the lack of a coherent and integrated student learning data management system was hindering teachers' and students' ability to manage their goal-setting and vocabulary. While the possible use of

an E-platform had previously emerged, the in-depth information I gained was the catalyst for more immediate action and resulted in the purchase of 'Managebac,' an E-student management system. Another example is found in the variety of approaches being used to teach vocabulary within the school. While this is perhaps not unusual, no guidelines existed within the school's teaching and learning policy for required or best practices or to handle issues of continuity as students move through the grades. Appraisals clearly indicated that it was time to address this. Additionally, becoming cognizant of the need to explicitly strengthen and sustain use of the PYP practices meant I was better able to plan ways to address these aspects of practice at the school level.

When discussing effective communication and collaboration with parents (standard 7, indicators 1 and 2, Appendix B), Harry revealed a certain frustration with a lack of parent involvement and support. In relation to a poetry unit, he explained: "Parents haven't been so very helpful providing us with examples from their cultures. Over all these years, we've only had one parent come in, they never volunteer. Parents must know poems from their traditions."

He also spoke about communication with parents related to homework:

I mean to a certain extent that requires parents to be paying attention. I mean, for example, like my conversation with [names student's] dad, they had their conference, we discussed goals, he promised to support her at home and then nothing, in fact, she asked me two and half weeks later for index cards to make flash cards, saying her dad didn't know where to buy them.

Communication with families (Hughes et al. 2006) is known to be one of the dimensions of successful schooling. It is related to student learning engagement, progress and achievement. There was clearly more I could do in my role as principal to further develop home-school links and better support teachers. My efforts would focus on updating information contained on our webpage, re-launching the school's homework policy and structuring parent information sessions on partnering with the school to support their child's education.

My understanding of how specific aspects of the school system were operating became more nuanced as a result of my involvement with teachers' practice during appraisals.

Cognisance of Fullan's (2008) systems' thinking approach helped me see patterns more clearly and provided me with the knowledge of how I might make changes to create a stronger system. Fullan (2008, p. 119) argues that "grappling with system complexities, taking action and then learning from the experiences" increases the chances of organizational improvement. While the examples here are specific to the teachers and context of the study, principals in other contexts may likewise gain increased knowledge of how their systems operate during similar appraisals.

## **6.8 Participants' engagement in the appraisal process**

Of particular interest within the study was how teachers would participate in the appraisal process. They may disengage, engage as an exercise in compliance or actively engage with whatever professional learning or development needs and/or opportunities that might arise. The factors that contribute to or inhibit teachers' engagement were also important. I was also interested in the details of how participants' engagement was similar to and different from each other, and suggested reasons why this might have been the case.

A number of key characteristics reflect Rachel's and Harry's engagement with the process: open discussion and reflection, pursuit of their learning goals, involvement in targeted professional learning opportunities and collaborative work with peers. This level of participation was driven and sustained by their growth mindsets, reflective practice, self-efficacy, interest and belief in contributing to capacity building at the school level. The relational trust and collaborative nature of the support provided during the appraisal process also seemed significant.

Harry's perspective on the purpose of appraisals also seemed to have been a factor in his participation. In comparing the process to Hattie's (2012) work, Harry appeared to view the process as relatively non-threatening and growth oriented:

This mimics Visible Learning. With Visible Learning strategies we're supposed to be guiding the children to become self-regulating learners. You're trying to guide teachers; you're behaving as the teacher, that's the way I'd look at it. The book mentions too, that you have to have a safe culture for Visible Learning. The old fashioned evaluation goes against having teachers' learning visible, you have to have that safe culture.

When discussing his professional development goals, Harry shared: “To get the standard to the distinguished level, that’s what we should be trying to reach, yea?”

In contrast, Mark’s buy-in to the appraisal process was limited, and while one cannot claim he was not reflecting on or about his practice, he seemed unwilling to share in this endeavour. Yet, when asked how he felt about the appraisal process, Mark shared: “It’s definitely a good idea, some of its hard to specifically give yourself a ranking against, but its easy to see 2-3 areas you’d want to work on, the ranking itself isn’t so important.”

Fullan (2007) highlights problems of individualism and norms of self-reliance within educational contexts and offers a variety of reasons these might prevail. These appear worth considering when analysing Mark’s participation. The strategies he made use of protect teachers and allow them to exercise discretionary judgment in classrooms, offer protection against scrutiny and intrusion and the insecurity that comes from fear of unfavourable judgments. Practitioners may also be reluctant to ask for help as they may be viewed as incompetent or lacking. In other cases, Fullan contends, self-interest or a personality trait may be at the root of efforts to retain an individualistic stance.

Dweck’s (2006) account of a more fixed mindset is equally worth considering in relation to Mark’s participation. Some individuals are reluctant to expose their deficiencies and “when presented with information that would help them learn,” Dweck, (2006, p. 18) contends, “there is no sign of interest, as this view may threaten or attack their view of themselves as a competent individual.” Mark’s comment, “its hard to specifically give yourself a ranking” against the standards and his perspective that this is not important would seem to align with Dweck’s perspective. He may, in an effort to protect his self-esteem and competency, have been reluctant or found it unnecessary to self-judge. Mark’s attribution of students’ supposed inability to deepen discussion and set goals also seems to reflect a view of student ability as innate and fixed, that some students have abilities that others don’t. People with this more fixed mindset may also be more judgmental.

I argue that while the incidents here are reflective of particular individuals and a particular school context, most principals will encounter teachers who are more or less willing to participate in appraisals and associated professional development initiatives. The final discussion in the following chapter summarizes how appraisals might best be operationalized for both types.

## **Conclusion**

The previous discussion illustrates the many opportunities that can arise to refine and improve practice as principals commit to the belief that professional learning and improved practice are the ultimate aim of teacher appraisal.

The study highlights the value of principals collaborating with teachers to gain detailed insight into areas where they as principals can commit insight, energy, time and resources to help practitioners strengthen instructional practices and overcome implementation challenges. It also illustrates the significance of teachers' growth mindset and reflective practice in efforts to improve, and the value of connecting peers in a tight-loose structure where colleagues are encouraged and supported in freely sharing practices and knowledge. In this structure, principals provide the monitoring mechanisms to help identify effective practices and intervene should interactions prove unproductive in strengthening the school's system as a whole. I acknowledge the value of Fullan's change strategies, in particular, connecting peers with purpose in job-embedded learning focused on capacity building. It proved to be a relevant theory of action to support change to a formative teacher appraisal model rooted in the desire for improved practice. Adopting a whole-school systems perspective on conducting appraisals also alerts principals to search for patterns of practice that should be shared, and those that need strengthening. This better equips them to identify strategies and approaches that can help support improvement in the system as a whole.

The following chapter turns to teachers' involvement in Instructional Rounds, the peer observational protocol used in the study to focus on how collaborative teams link to appraisal.



## **Chapter 7 Analysis and discussion of Instructional Rounds in relation to capacity building**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings, analysis and interpretation of participants' engagement with Instructional Rounds. Analysis is based on four participants in two teaching teams. Including this peer-based protocol puts a deliberate focus on the work of teaching teams, which I was very keen to investigate. My interest in the influence of teaching teams in capacity building arose as a direct result of my literature review, particularly the work of Johnson (2012). She observes that efforts to improve pedagogy, when linked to appraisal, almost exclusively focus on the work of individual teachers and fail to account for the potential impact of teaching teams and the teachers' school contexts. I hoped incorporating Instructional Rounds into appraisals would achieve a collective adult focus on learning centered on instructional practice. Fullan, (2008, 2011, 2013), among others, supports this perspective that teams of teachers working collaboratively on a shared purpose build capacity in a school over time.

Standard 8, indicator 1 of the appraisal system explicitly requires teachers to "Exhibit collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning" (Appendix B). Including Instructional Rounds meant I was providing teachers with an explicit structure for exhibiting such practices. Teachers' involvement in Instructional Rounds, together with their contributions to the work of their peers during individual appraisals provided the data with which to appraise teachers' practice for this standard.

### **7.2. Analysis of Instructional Rounds – implementation challenges**

Roberts (2012, p.9) identifies two types of challenges, cultural and structural, in using Instructional Rounds, and refers to the rounds process as "culturally disruptive and structurally challenging." I was concerned about three potential cultural factors. Firstly, I was concerned that teachers may feel intimidated, although the process is presented (Clay et al. 2009, Roberts, 2012) as a comparatively non-judgmental, non-threatening structure for classroom observations. Teachers are specifically directed to take descriptive rather than evaluative notes on the 'instructional core', meaning what they observed and heard teachers and students doing within a lesson (Roberts, 2012). I was conscious that teachers might nevertheless feel uncomfortable. While the participants acknowledged a certain amount of initial trepidation in their comments below, their

summative comments included in the end of this chapter illustrate that all four participants ultimately viewed the initiative as positive.

Ellen observed, “Leading up to the observation, it was very intimidating to think about having my peers and principal come in and observe. This was due in part to the fact that we were all trying this for the first time and didn’t know what to expect.”

Mark said that “Although a bit intimidating at first because of not knowing the process or expectation, I think it was a good experience and I look forward to doing it again.”

Harry highlighted the struggle to adopt a descriptive rather than evaluative perspective to observations:

In a way it is very difficult to be a neutral observer, I struggled with trying not to evaluate the teacher.

Implementing a school-based practice of rounds in a situation where teachers interact and work with each other socially and professionally every day, I was apprehensive collegial or social relationships might be impacted should observations result in unexpected or contentious findings. This did not occur.

Secondly, asking teachers to de-privatize their classrooms and invite others who each have their own viewpoints to observe their practice using a structured observational protocol was new. I speculated about what teachers would notice and focus on during observations. Reaching a shared understanding of competent practice is not unproblematic amongst educators. Issues such as what constitutes effective practice, the degree of consistency needed to build coherency across grades, what practices should be improved, and indeed what lies within the control of educators to improve are not easily resolved. Teachers can also differ in their ideas about what sorts of tasks best result in learning and how they should be presented (Roberts, 2012, Hattie, 2012). This situation is further compounded in International Schools where teachers have trained in different pedagogies, engaged with different teaching resources and often do not use the same vocabulary to describe similar educational concepts. Despite the common framework of shared reference and terminology provided by the IB PYP, which is a significant benefit to teachers in International schools, differing perspectives still exist. The school does have what I would consider strong relational trust between teachers. Collaborative planning occurs at grade levels, and teaching is an on-going focus of

faculty meetings. The next stage was to support educators to develop into the kind of collaborative team envisaged by Du Four et al. (2008 pp. 179-180) as “*a group of people working together interdependently to achieve a common goal for which they are mutually accountable, (italics, origin)*”. This was new, and would entail teachers, as Du Four et al. describe, relying on each other, becoming dependent on and accountable to each other to help students reach higher levels of learning. I wondered if teachers would be reluctant to comment on or analyse a colleague’s teaching or to suggest that student learning might be better served through alternative pedagogies.

Thirdly, I wondered if observed lessons would differ from ‘normal’ classroom practice. Although teachers intimated they would not, I inferred from the comments below that while being observed had some impact on the structure, timing and format of their lessons, sessions were largely more usual than unusual, worth observing and reflecting on:

The level of participation by students was normal, prepared materials, collaborative planning, use of a graphic organizer and model text, all normal. Unusual; the amount of time I spent at the front of the room talking [Ellen]

Apart from asking students to use a 6-room graphic organizer, during independent practice instead of using it only as a suggestion for planning as I normally would, my lesson was very usual [Rachel]

Being somewhat uneasy with upcoming observations, teachers may have tightened the planning and/or scripting of their lessons to achieve more control over the learning engagement so less was left to chance.

The structural challenge in implementing Instructional Rounds was plainly scheduling; finding time within the school day when teachers were free to observe each other’s practice is not simple. This proved less of a challenge than anticipated, as teachers at the same grade levels share common release time for specialist subjects (foreign languages, P.E. and computer/library classes). This meant cover was needed at only one time for two classes. While I did ask ‘favours’ of other teachers to provide substitute cover for these observations and the debrief meetings, I subsequently reached an arrangement with the middle and high school principals to allocate a specific number of substitute hours to teachers with fewer contact hours. This greatly eased continued

implementation of Instructional Rounds during the next academic year. I am cognizant however, that contact hours in International Schools are perhaps more flexible than those in a state system where they may be mandated. Instructional Rounds may therefore require some principals to be more creative with timetables or to budget for substitute cover.

Structurally, I provided no instruction for teachers about how they should take observational notes. The graphic organizer Harry created and his approach to note-taking (see Appendix H) were particularly clear, effective, practical and easy to analyse. I would adopt this approach with teachers during subsequent rounds. Mark, Ellen and Rachel's notes were somewhat sketchier and harder for them to analyse.

### **7.3 The benefits of Instructional Rounds**

Data on Instructional Rounds came from three sources: teachers' observational notes, teacher reflections and the transcript of the group debrief meeting at the end of the process. Appendix H details the questions used to frame the debrief meeting with the two teaching teams. These questions were also used to analyse data in teachers' Rounds observations. The concepts and questions loosely mirror the structure of a lesson cycle and could assist in identifying and analysing constructs that might occur during and across participants' actual lessons.

Three major themes for instructional practice emerged from the Instructional Rounds:

- A focus on Learning Intentions and Success Criteria
- Lesson structure
- Activating student engagement within lessons

#### **7.3.1 Learning Intentions and Success Criteria**

All four teachers had attended two professional workshops based on John Hattie's work with Visible Learning (2012). A major focus of the workshops was the use of learning intentions, success criteria and feedback to students. Instructional Rounds however, revealed considerable variation in the way learning intentions and success criteria were being used across classrooms with students. (Learning intentions and success criteria used by teachers to structure their lessons are detailed in Appendix H) This is best illustrated in the discussion below, where Harry began:

I did learn something from the observations, there were differences, some learning intentions were written, and some were oral. The success criteria can't always be written down, I know that, they're in your head and you're communicating them. But, for example with your lessons [speaking to Ellen and Mark] you had themes in there. That whole circle/clock strategy for mapping a story, while I was watching I was thinking, wow, there's a whole lot of stuff in there, and some kids can handle that and some kids can't [Harry]

Rachel provided details of how these lessons involved students using and building schema, inferring, predicting the plot of a story and mapping it using a clock diagram (specific events were mapped to the times on the clock).

Ellen seem to accept this comment about the number of foci within learning intentions:

"I definitely noticed broad versus narrow learning objectives, I think that's pretty much what you're saying. I wonder about breaking them down to be more simplified..."

Harry continued, "Yours was like a three day lesson and maybe mine too," to which Ellen replied:

Yea, it's really the unit focus. I think we're kind of saying breaking down learning objectives into smaller pieces and the same with the success criteria, so students can better engage with them and really use them to guide their learning so they know what the goal for the lesson is.

Mark and Ellen made up one teaching team. They were providing students with very broad objectives that involved multiple foci. Harry and Rachel, in contrast, were using smaller, more succinct learning goals. Clark (2008) suggests although this is not necessarily a problem, multiple learning objectives are often at play in any one lesson. For example, a lesson may have a long-term objective, a short-term objective and related key skills, which of themselves can be long or short term. Clark posits that what is required is for long-term objectives to be broken down and clearly explained to students. This was not happening. The rounds illustrated that additional teacher

development, perhaps in the form of observing commercial videos of classroom practice, additional in-house observations, collaborative discussion and/or additional reading was needed. This could ensure consistency and progression in practice so students could use learning intentions and success criteria effectively in the manner Hattie (2012, pp.52-57) intended, as “the tools, which enable pupils to exercise power over their own learning.”

### **7.3.2 Lesson Structure**

Another theme emerged from teachers’ observations. Lesson structure was noted in their reflections and raised in the debrief discussion. This emanated from the debrief question on how learning tasks were presented, new concepts introduced, practice opportunities provided, and learning gradually released to students. Teachers recognized that they were all using modelling to introduce new strategies and concepts. Each was providing examples and using graphic organizers to help students structure their thinking and activate schema. These are all research-based strategies considered effective in supporting learning (Marzano, 2001). Rounds highlighted consistent strategies already at work across these two grades.

The Instructional Rounds prompted discussion of differences in the way lessons were structured. Harry asserted:

It’s related to chunking, like one phase, you introduce of the lesson, provide scaffolding to something they know or have already done, and then after getting some schema going, introduce another new idea, let them work on it, then end the lesson hopefully. But I feel like sometimes lessons can be convoluted.

Rachel added:

Yea, I can see what you were saying about those lessons (referring to literacy lessons observed in Mark and Ellen’s classrooms); the content could be covered separately on different days, because there were quite a few different areas in those lessons. In the first part of the lesson you wanted them to build their schema, to talk about what had happened in the story, the second part was inferring. I think predication was third, but I noticed some of the kids had read the success criteria and when they were supposed to be talking about

schema they wanted to make predictions. It could have been schema one day, and then inferring the next and then predicting the next.

Discussion also emerged about the relative amount of time teachers talked and how they controlled discussion. Harry commented on the amount of 'teacher talk' during Ellen and Mark's lessons, "you guys talked an awful lot." In contrast, Rachel's lesson consisted of a 15-minute mini-lesson and Harry's explanations were interspersed with regular intervals of students individually and in groups generating ideas for similes.

Hattie (2012, p. 81) argues some "didactic imparting of information and ideas is necessary," but in "too many classrooms there needs to be less teacher-dominated talk, and more student talking and involvement." Hattie recommends teachers gain independent analysis of their lessons to check the proportion of lesson time given to teacher as opposed to student talk. In highlighting this discrepancy Instructional Rounds fulfilled this function. The debrief illustrated the benefit of discussing the flow of a lesson, the number of different concepts that students should encounter within any given lesson and the amount of teacher talk versus active student engagement.

### **7.3.3 Activating student engagement within lessons**

Linked to this focus on lesson cycles and structure, the participants discussed attaining and managing student engagement. Harry pulled popsicle sticks to call on individuals randomly. At other times he invited the student speaking to name the next contributor. Rachel employed 'turn and talk' partners while Mark and Ellen called on students with their hands raised. Harry added:

I think because they are kids you are going to have to, no matter what force a structure in, maybe its best to have a variety of structures, even just calling people, sometimes I call on people who don't have their hands up, that's just a list of what you call classroom procedures or protocols.

Ellen contributed:

To me it's about common language. Classes of kids knowing the same kinds of cues and strategies to get into learning, but I did come back to what you were saying, you do need that repertoire of different strategies.

Rachel, sharing a similar perspective added:

I think so too and consistent language, that we use throughout the lessons, consistent format/structure for the lesson too because then students will know when the teacher is about to present the objective or teaching point and that they also get time for independent practice.

The Instructional Rounds brought teachers to discuss ways to generate student engagement. Follow-up work in this area, like teachers sharing and inquiring into best practice, had the potential to enhance student engagement. This type of collaborative work might support the development of Mark's practice, as a focus on these strategies would be required during his next appraisal.

#### **7.4 Achieving a focus on student learning during Instructional Rounds**

What emerged very clearly from analysing the teachers' reflections and the debrief meeting was that focusing simultaneously on all three elements of the Instructional Core (teachers, students and content) as recommended by Clay et al. (2009) and Roberts (2012) proved too broad and challenging an initial focus. While participants were able to observe and later analyse teachers' practice, gaining a comprehensive understanding of student learning at the same time as focusing on instruction proved unfeasible. Mark clearly articulated this reality:

Our main focus, our main take away, perhaps ended up being about the structure of teacher lessons, so maybe we'd do more with student learning observations next time. I think more insight was gained into teacher practice and how more continuity and common practice can be pursued moving forward.

Teachers did make some observations about student participation in lessons as reflected in their statements below, but these could not be construed as showing that teachers were gaining objective or detailed insights into what students were actually learning:



Seeing the different stages of a lesson in different contexts was really valuable. I observed how students really responded to modelling, guiding and eventual independent release [Ellen]

Seeing students within the same classes who struggled and succeeded at the same points in these different lessons reminded me of the importance of differentiation. I am wondering how I can better meet the needs of all learners in my class [Rachel]

Instructional Rounds were originally designed (Clay et al. 2009, Robertson, 2012) to have teachers from networks of schools across a district visit a host school to help determine and analyse patterns of instruction related to some 'problem of practice' and suggest steps that could be taken to improve. A team of visiting teachers usually completes these rounds in a day. The study highlights the value of administrators and teachers within a school-based system of rounds initially focusing on collectively identifying problems of practice and then planning focused and sustained follow-up on those specific areas over a period of time. This offers the potential for greater in-depth learning and sustained reflective inquiry.

## **7.5 Continued Implementation of Instructional Rounds**

The three major themes that emerged from the rounds process suggest that it would be helpful to plan a series of rounds focused on specific areas related to teaching and learning, rather than try to simultaneously focus on all aspects of the Instructional core (the actions of teachers, students and content). Perhaps networks of schools using the protocol as it was originally designed or schools at a different developmental level might be able to focus on all three. The luxury of school-based rounds, perhaps, is that these can be slowed down to focus on what matters and what needs to be addressed within a school. In my school setting the following discreet foci emerged from an analysis of teachers participation, and are possible topics for subsequent rounds:

- Teachers collaboratively planning learning intentions and success criteria and observing their implementation
- An examination of student engagement with learning intentions and success criteria

- Lesson structure/lesson cycle
- A focus on student learning, particularly observers engaging with students, asking them to articulate what they are learning by answering:

Where am I going? / What am I learning?

How am I doing? / How is it going?

Where to next? / What do I do next?

(Hattie 2012, Hook 2012)

- Strategies being used across the school to engage students in the learning process
- Differentiation – the kinds of scaffolding or targeted support provided for students

I chose the initial context, or ‘problem of practice,’ for our Instructional Rounds. The foci chosen above surfaced from teachers’ participation in the process. Roberts, (2012, p. 17) asserts that the ultimate aim of Instructional Rounds is for teachers within a school to “take control of their own learning in ways that are more likely to lead to sustained improvement over time.” This was a small-scale study. Roberts (2012) asserts that it is important that educators experience Rounds as part of a regular on-going improvement practice, and not as an isolated event. It was the case, that within the study, observations certainly led to an increased sense of shared knowledge about the methodologies used to teach literacy skills across the two grades. I contend that subsequent discussion and analysis between teachers helped us begin to establish the expectation that strategies to support collaborative endeavours to improve practice would be explicitly implemented at the school. I hope the initiative will be the beginning of a continuous cycle of inquiry about instructional practice. Perhaps the final comment on the impact of Instructional Rounds should be Harry’s:

I expect Instructional Rounds will make teachers more comfortable with each other. We’ll see the changes in the school culture as teachers see themselves joined with other teachers. We’ll see it in individual classrooms in ways that reflect teachers’ deeper awareness of the children’s experiences during their lessons as they pass through the grades.

### 7.5.1 Operationalizing future Rounds

All four teachers articulated they would like to see rounds continue and offered suggestions about how they would like to see these operationalized:

I think we should be given a way to codify observation results based on a common structure of what a good lesson should have, quickly use it to analyse our practice, set a goal to improve and then do it again having the whole group work together. It's really valuable to have it with the grade below/above. Maybe working within year groups too is a good idea [Ellen]

Discuss what the biggest improvement could be to implement, decide on the goal as a group, try it out then have it observed and all data collected should be based around evidence related to the goal. Then reflect again as a group and come up with next steps from there [Rachel]

Perhaps new teachers should first observe the process without being included in observations so they see the reflection portion and get to feel that reflection and improved student learning is the goal. It's very important teachers feel completely comfortable, certain and absolutely assured that the process is entirely free of backlash or condemnation, no matter what [Harry]

I think it was a good experience and look forward to doing it again. It may not be necessary to observe a whole 40-minute block, perhaps just a particular part, such as the mini-lesson, introduction of learning intentions etc. I would like to see a focus for the rounds. If grades 4-6 were working in a particular trait-literacy element, it would be nice to do a round to see what students are learning at each level which would help to bridge any gaps or add complexity if needed [Mark]

These contributions from participants clearly align with findings (TALIS, 2008, 2013, Darling Hammond, 2013, Fullan 2008, 2011, 2013) that teachers value job-embedded, collaborative professional learning and suggest that principals should provide more of these opportunities.

## **7.6 Analysis of Rounds in relation to Fullan's Framework**

The findings from the Instructional Rounds, when viewed in relation to Fullan's framework, align with those identified with capacity building at the school level in the previous chapter. Connecting peers in purposeful interactions, focusing improvement efforts in job embedded learning and adopting a systems focus is equally applicable to experiencing success with Instructional Rounds.

### **Summary**

The study suggests that linking Instructional Rounds with appraisal processes and providing structures teachers can use to directly address teaching standards for professionalism or collaborative practice seems to provide an additional way to build capacity. Perhaps even the structure chosen to achieve this focus on collaborative practice is relatively unimportant. Hattie (2012), in addition to Instructional Rounds, particularly recommends using a data teams model, mentoring, coaching, or the formation of professional learning communities. What appears to matter is that teachers are critiquing practice collaboratively, and making informed judgments about how they can collectively build on each other's practice for the benefit of all students.

## **Chapter 8 Conclusion**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The central aim of this study was to investigate how teacher appraisal might be effectively restructured to focus on continuing professional development at the individual teacher and school level. Using the research findings and literature, this final chapter seeks to consolidate discussion to illustrate how principals and teachers can become more actively involved in appraisal and achieve a focus on profession learning and improvements in pedagogy.

### **8.2 Rationale for the study**

The focus of this study developed from challenges (See 2.1) I experienced as a primary school principal using our former evaluation system. As teacher appraisal is an on-going professional responsibility, I developed a keen interest in finding a more effective and meaningful approach. My literature review influenced my research questions. The work of Papay (2012), who draws a clear distinction between the summative and formative purposes of appraisals, was particularly significant. He unequivocally argues the ultimate aims of appraisal are its function as a mechanism to drive improvements in instruction and to support gains in student learning outcomes. Essentially, this led me to focus primarily on formative appraisal to understand how I might better support teacher development and improved pedagogy through the appraisal process. Johnson's (2012) argument that appraisal's traditional focus on individuals fails to consider the impact of teaching teams and the environments in which teachers work motivated me to include a focus on teams. I was interested to see if and how appraisal could contribute to improvement at the school level. These influences led to the formation of research questions that probe the following areas:

How can teachers and principals within IB PYP schools become more actively involved in an appraisal system that focuses on professional development and systematic learning?

How can appraisal be effectively operationalized as a professional development tool at the school level to support on-going teacher development in implementing the standards and practices the IB PYP?

What benefits and challenges might accrue for teachers and principals during the implementation process?

### **8.3 Review of the research**

Following a literature review to gain a clear appreciation and understanding of prominent concepts, themes and issues in the field of teacher appraisal, phase 1 of the study entailed developing a tool and process for conducting appraisals. After examining a large number of appraisal systems available in the public domain (Danielson (2008, 2011, 2013), Marzano (2007, 2013 and others), I came to believe that determining teaching standards and developing an accompanying rubric to define and explain specific levels of performance would make the best tool to support teachers' continuing development. The tool developed simultaneously functioned in multiple ways: in teacher self-assessment, as an observational protocol for formative assessments of teaching practice, as the basis for feedback and on-going professional conversations, and as a guide for teachers' goal-setting and professional development plans. Incorporating 4 levels of practice, 'unsatisfactory, basic, proficient and distinguished' provided for the systematic development of novices to experienced professionals. Harry, an experienced practitioner, acknowledged this function when he asserted his belief that the purpose was to reach a distinguished rating for each standard. I was particularly interested in tailoring appraisal standards to school developmental needs that had been identified in a joint accreditation by CIS/NEASC and ensuring that they address implementation standards set by the IB PYP. The OECD (2012) acknowledges that "emphasizing certain areas of teachers' work over others in appraisal and feedback sends signals to teachers" about what is needed and valued. Danielson (2013) and Darling Hammond (2013) support adapting existing models to local contexts. As international schools operate outside most state-mandated guidelines, I had the freedom to do this.

I employed a case study approach for its ability to facilitate study of participants' experiences embedded in real life contexts. This enabled me to explore and monitor the significant factors and events in teachers' participation, possible cause and effect relationships and any changes that occurred over the course of their appraisal experience. My role was that of participant observer. I systematically collected data about experiences while simultaneously participating in the study as a principal appraising and supporting teachers' practice. Jones and Jones (2013) cite the work of Glesne (1999) who argues that participant observers "risk losing the eye of the uninvolved observer, yet the more you participate the greater your opportunity to learn."

I feel my research data supports this assertion and confirms that through my on-going participation I gained more in-depth knowledge of individual teachers' capabilities and challenges adopting this research role than I could have in enacting solely my role as principal. I was also able to see how different aspects of the school system were operating and how they might be improved. In addition, as principal, I was required to conduct appraisals. The study provided me with the opportunity to examine, reflect on and learn from the process rather than focus purely on implementation. Ultimately, my involvement enabled me identify factors that I assert can lead to effective and meaningful implementation of appraisals.

I adopted Fullan's (2008) framework for change as the theoretical guide and basis for analysing our changeover to a primarily formative focus to appraisal. It was attractive, in part because it is grounded in change efforts in comparable public and private educational contexts. The framework informed phase 2, the empirical data gathering component of the study, as it alerted me to ideas and strategies likely helpful in implementing the structural change to a more formative appraisal process. Phase 2 began with individual appraisals with teachers. Once the individual appraisals were underway shortly after the interim phase, I introduced Instructional Rounds, a peer observational protocol, into the study to accommodate the desired focus on teaching teams' linked to appraisal.

I analysed the data specifically to ascertain how appraisal might support (1) individual teachers' professional learning, (2) teachers' professional learning needs in implementing the standards and practices of the IB PYP, and (3) the ability of appraisals to support capacity building at the school level. In the analysis several themes emerged that were linked to these three focus areas.

## **8.4 Research Findings**

### **8.4.1 Supporting individual teachers' professional learning through appraisal**

Two distinct types of participant take-up and buy-in to the appraisal process emerged. Some of the teachers' participation could be described as active and involved. One teacher's contributions, explanations and actions reflected a more compliant acceptance and tolerance than actual interest in the process. I expect that most principals will encounter a spectrum of attitudes among teachers engaging in this type of formative appraisal. The challenge is how to effectively engage both groups.

#### **8.4.1.1 Actively involved participants**

My findings revealed that through formative appraisal activities and discussions, principals can obtain more in-depth, nuanced knowledge about the teachers like Rachel and Harry who engage openly and earnestly in the appraisal process. This can help them provide support tailored to specific teachers' needs. For these teachers there is great value in principals committing resources and time to support the learning needs identified for each individual during appraisals. This is illustrated by Harry's positive uptake on access to a professional development website to learn more about goal-setting with students. It aligns with Fullan's foundation strategy of love your employees, which stresses the value of leaders deliberately focusing their efforts to help all teachers succeed.

My findings also illustrated the relevancy of Fullan's strategies of connecting peers with purpose in job-embedded learning to support capacity building. Rachel's involvement with a colleague highlights the potential power of peer interactions to support professional learning. She gained access to new pedagogical approaches for vocabulary development, use of ICT and assessment tools as a result of her involvement with a peer during the appraisal process.

The benefit of what Fullan describes as a 'tight-loose' system is also noteworthy. In adopting this strategy leaders help identify a potential focus, involve themselves in ensuring the sustainability of collaborative efforts and intervene if interactions are not conducive to capacity building. At the same time teachers remain free to share strategies and resources among themselves. Rachel's work with a colleague on the series of lessons involving vocabulary and ICT demonstrates how colleagues can greatly expand initiatives initially set up by principals. Fullan (2011, p. 19) argues the existence of what he terms a 'social learning dynamic' in colleagues learning from each other and contends, "once capacity reaches a certain level, it is peers who become the main source of innovation."

Encouraging concerted interactions between teachers in pursuit of capacity building was not merely a case of matching and proposing that teachers with similarly documented goals collaborate and work together, although, this too could be effective. If principals are intimately aware of teachers' current practice, particular strengths, areas for improvement, professional learning goals and interests, they can exploit opportunities to



link teachers with otherwise unknown ties that present themselves organically and unexpectedly.

Opportunities to acknowledge teachers' current effective practices arose during appraisals. Research literature (OECD, 2012, p. 1) supports its beneficial impact to "shape, develop and promote effective teaching." However, the TALIS report (ibid. p. 1) "shows that three-quarters of teachers feel that they would receive no recognition for improving the quality of their teaching or for being more innovative in the teaching." The observations also afforded the chance to identify and suggest modest refinements to teachers' practice that could strengthen their pedagogy and help them meet their professional growth goals. This was illustrated best in Rachel's case, where she learned that lesson objectives she was providing orally and in writing on anchor charts could easily be refined to enable her reach her objective of using the terminology of learning intentions and success criteria effectively with students.

Individual teachers showed initiative on ideas we had discussed or followed up on during appraisal discussions. For example, Rachel introduced a vocabulary website to support student vocabulary development, and offered to mentor new teachers in a word study program. Her colleague proposed that he share his ICT expertise with colleagues and at a faculty meeting. I contend that the collaborative efforts teachers undertook with their peers and/or their on-going interactions with me resulted in them feeling that their efforts were valued and motivated them to expand and increase their efforts.

Finally I saw the potential for activities and discussions that arose during or as a result of the appraisals to contribute to developing a learning culture at the school. I believe that being open and enthusiastic about my own interest to help teachers solve challenges, support improvements efforts and engage in shared educational discourse with them, exploring issues and challenges with the aim of finding solutions, are behaviours associated with developing a learning culture. It promotes the expectation that everyone, including the principal, should be involved in on-going continual professional learning.

#### **8.4.1.2 Less than enthusiastic participants**

Some teachers demonstrate limited buy-in or compliance with the process. This might be more accurately described as reluctance to adopt or disengagement from the formative development opportunities appraisal can provide. Fullan's strategy of love your employees advocates the suspension of short-term judgment in favour of capacity building, along with an exploration of why teachers may react this way. Fullan (2008)

identifies and urges leaders to consider a range of possible contributing factors, which was illustrated in the case of Mark.

The value of the appraisal tool's inbuilt summative accountability mechanism in capacity building became apparent in working with teachers who were rated at an unsatisfactory or basic level for a standard in either self-assessments or through observation. In Mark's case, observations revealed a need to increase student participation in discussion and use assessment data in goal setting and giving feedback to students. In discussion, these were identified as required professional development goals for a subsequent appraisal. Fullan's change strategy related to transparency is important here as he cautions that principals must address issues when they occur in order to make the system stronger.

#### **8.4.1.3 Summary**

The formative appraisal processes implemented during this study can provide substantive professional development opportunities for individuals and peers. The study illustrated that take-up on these opportunities is best achieved with positive teacher learning dispositions and on-going, invested and deliberate involvement of the principal. I acknowledge that the examples and findings about supporting individual teacher professional learning needs are time and context-bound to the school where the study was conducted. The process and strategies used to support teachers' professional development needs, however, can be transferred. They may be helpful to other principals wishing to adopt or increase a professional learning focus in appraisals or those seeking some insight into how to engage both enthusiastic and reluctant teachers in appraisals.

#### **8.4.2 IB PYP Standards and Practices**

A significant theme that emerged was the need to support implementation of core PYP strategies. Observations and discussions highlighted varying degrees of implementation, namely, limited use of key concepts, an inquiry cycle, focus on transdisciplinary skills and the IB Learner Profile. A differentiated approach was needed to operationalize support.

Rachel's case illustrates the value of principals adopting activities associated with instructional leadership. Examples of such actions are providing resources like key texts or video clips of inquiry based strategies, offering pragmatic suggestions to support

deliberate practice, modelling lessons and providing opportunities to observe colleagues' classes.

For other participants, the tactics that emerged as important were actions like reminding them of the school's explicit focus on the PYP, subsequent monitoring to observe these elements in their practice and a school-based initiative of regular faculty meetings where implementation strategies could be shared. These are key to sustaining the key elements essential for the school's IB accreditation, where trained IB observers determine a school's level of implementation of core practices.

Unless I addressed the weakened implementation I noticed in some areas, the program could weaken, the continuity of student experience could be compromised, and some teachers could be left to fill the gaps created by others' inattention to the key elements. Fullan (2008) refers to the concept of 'unplanned discontinuity,' stresses the role of leadership in programs' continuation and sustainability and recognizes the concept of an 'implementation dip.' The appraisal process alerted me to these weaknesses in practice and provided a structure with which to address them.

#### **8.4.3 Contributions by the appraisal process to school-level capacity building**

The study's findings regarding teaching teams came from two sources, participants' interactions with colleagues during individual appraisals and in Instructional Rounds.

Three significant themes emerged. The first theme confirmed that efforts to connect colleagues in supporting pedagogical improvements is beneficial to school-level capacity building too. Opportunities exist to spread expertise among teachers.

The second theme relates to appraisals' ability to identify those teachers who can contribute to capacity building at the school level.

Because of my increased involvement and interaction with teachers during the appraisal process I gained greater, more nuanced knowledge of their capabilities, knowledge and dispositions. The process identified teachers with strong pedagogical knowledge and skills, interest in contributing, commitment and a growth mind-set. These teachers can extend their influence beyond their classroom and teaching teams to contribute to school improvement initiatives. Fullan (2008) describes teachers who have the dispositions, attitudes and ability to learn and work both individually and collaboratively with others as 'individually and systems talented' and recommends schools actively try

to recruit and retain such teachers. I argue that my deliberate aim and efforts to increase my involvement with teachers during appraisals reflects some of the efforts that Fullan asserts leaders need to provide to increase teachers' motivation and feeling of being valued that lead them to develop a collective commitment to school improvement.

The third theme that emerged related to improved leadership knowledge of how aspects of the system was operating and where improvements might be made. The study illustrated the benefits of supporting teacher interactions to ensure they are effective and productive in pursuit of pedagogical improvement.

As noted earlier, the gains attained here are specific to the teachers and school where the study was conducted. Even so, other practitioners could expect to reap benefits similar to the access these teachers gained to new pedagogies as a result of the support of colleagues and my own more nuanced knowledge of how aspects of the school system are operating and where initiating changes would be beneficial.

## **8.5 Key implications for practitioners**

The importance of the following elements from the study is worth noting for their relevance for principals seeking to adopt a professional development approach to appraisals:

### **8.5.1 Active engagement in appraisal: importance of the appraisal tool and process**

#### **8.5.1.1 The appraisal tool**

Instituting the use of an appraisal tool based on teaching standards was significant in the study. Having a tool that was theoretically sound was key to my confidence and motivation when implementing the process. The standards I chose drew on concrete, detailed, recognized standards in the field, namely Marzano's Teacher Evaluation Model (2013), Danielson's Framework for Teaching (2013) and a number of national state and district standards. They describe and examine teaching along a number of dimensions of practice shown to be associated with student learning (Darling Hammond 2013, Marzano, 2013, Danielson 2013). Major recommendations from the school's CIS/NEASC accreditation report, together with specific standards and practices for key elements of the IB PYP were incorporated into the tool. This led me to believe the tool could address the developmental needs of my own school's context.

Darling Hammond (2013, p. 23) asserts that “one reason standards seem to promote productive learning through the evaluation process is that they are expressed in performance terms – that is, they describe what teachers should know, be like and are able to do.” The tool proved useful in providing criteria teachers could use to self-assess and determine competence in their practice along a scale of implementation, in analysing actual classroom performance and in focusing and guiding feedback to teachers. Darling Hammond notes that the format of these tools differs significantly from narrative “open-ended forms that allow evaluators to determine idiosyncratically what they think is important in the classroom,” and from checklists for teacher observations that often reflect traditional “behaviorist approaches that list discrete teaching behaviors that may or may not support learning” (Darling Hammond, 2013, p. 23). Darling Hammond’s view reflects my frustration with the school’s previous tool.

The rating scale I chose supported the continued growth of both novice and experienced teachers (Darling Hammond, 2013, Marzano, 2013, Danielson 2013). The rating scale also proved significant in identifying the degree of follow-up, intervention and support teachers needed.

Seeing teachers’ engagement with their professional growth goals and access to additional pedagogical strategies and knowledge illustrates that standards-based tools support formative objectives. This tool, when needed, can also provide a summative assessment of teachers’ practice. Weak indicators should function to hold teachers’ accountable for addressing these practices. My experience in developing and using this appraisal tool leads me to posit that principals’ belief and confidence in the appraisal tool’s ability to effectively support formative developmental goals significantly affects teachers’ engagement in appraisals. Darling Hammond, (2013, p. 24) cautions that despite advances in the development of teaching standards, “there has been remarkably little effort to connect these standards to on-the-job evaluations of teachers.” Changing to the new tool and process helped make the appraisal more meaningful for me as the one who evaluated teachers’ engagement with the process.

#### **8.5.1.2. Appraisal process**

The design of the appraisal process played an important role in contributing to teachers’ engagement and my own involvement as an evaluator. Teachers commented that the requirement to self-assess and provide a rating made them think about how their practice matched standards and indicators in order to identify areas they needed/wished to strengthen. Incorporating formal follow-up discussions in the process provided

opportunities for both teachers and me to question, clarify and elaborate. This gave me a more nuanced understanding of teachers' challenges and why they identified particular developmental learning needs. The follow-ups also provided an impetus for teachers to sustain their implementation of the process.

Darling Hammond (2013 p. 57), notes dialogue's importance in appraisals; "Dialogue, done right, can foster open pedagogically sophisticated conversations between principals and teachers and allow for a common understanding of challenges." As my data shows, this allowed me to explicitly target support in weak areas. All three teachers addressed their self-chosen development goals. This leads me to assert that requiring teachers to focus on no more than three growth goals is significant. This seemed to focus and limit teachers' efforts and to be more manageable in working to improve. This contrasts to teachers trying to focus developmental efforts on all the competencies and indicators they had self-assessed as needing strengthening. My on-going interactions with teachers, having reflective discussions about progress toward and challenges in reaching their goals, informal drop-ins, exchanges, and sharing resources was significant in sustaining engagement on both our parts.

These interactions with teachers provide opportunities for principals to develop as instructional leaders. Adopting Fullan's strategies, I used my more detailed and nuanced knowledge of teachers' practices and the challenges they had shared with me to identify opportunities for peers to support each others' professional learning. This was vital as I sought to form connections between faculty to provide job-embedded learning in an attempt to build capacity.

Reflection leads me to assert that cognizance of Fullan's framework strongly influenced me to enact appraisals in this particular formative way. One serious shortcoming of teacher evaluation reforms, according to Darling Hammond, (2013, ix) is that "they have often focused on designing instruments for observing teachers, without developing the structural elements of a sound evaluation system." The findings of this study illustrate how Fullan's strategies might help principals wishing to strengthen the formative role of appraisals and/or to incorporate structures that will allow them to take the collaborative nature of teachers' work and their school context into account in appraisals. I also posit that requiring teachers to identify performance objectives, development goals and strategies to meet them before the end of each school year helps establish a cycle and expectation of continual improvement for teacher's subsequent appraisals. It provides the possibility to support teacher performance progressively and systematically. I also

attest that teachers' understanding of the formative purpose of appraisal, as opposed to it having a summative accountability focus, resulted in better teacher buy-in and engagement with the process. This was reflected in Harry's comments about his understanding of the appraisal process and Rachel's comments about the benefits of instructional rounds.

### **8.5.2 Formative appraisal – a more progressive role for principals**

Data gathered for this study illustrates that in deliberately and actively seeking to provide resources, collaborative experiences, opportunities, or practical support that could help teachers achieve their professional learning goals I was actively involved in activities closely associated with Instructional Leadership. The data also shows that my sustained involvement in the appraisals contributed to establishing purposeful peer connections that resulted in teachers accessing new pedagogies and learning opportunities. This is most clearly illustrated in Rachel's case. The results lead me to assert that establishing professional development, as one of the purposes of appraisal requires that principals take a modified, more progressive role in appraisal. Adopting this formative approach alters the principal's job to be more focused on leading professional learning. I felt my role and responsibilities changed as I instituted the process. I went from conducting appraisals, as a yearly event using formal observations and requiring associated bureaucratic paperwork to more consciously trying to exploit opportunities that arose in day-to-day interactions to help teachers address pedagogical challenges and meet their learning needs.

Darling Hammond (2013, pp. 115-116) suggests that what is needed to fulfil this role is principals having "an understanding of how to evaluate teaching, how to give useful feedback, and how to plan professional development that supports teacher learning." She attributes the "ineffectiveness of appraisal to impact teaching and learning" to weaknesses in principals' competencies in these areas." The solution, she suggests, is strong principal preparation in teacher evaluation and professional development activities together with others involved in similar work. While this should support improvement, I argue that the benefits of job-embedded learning for teachers illustrated within the study should apply equally to principals' learning of factors that support formative appraisal. Fullan (2011, p. 21) advises leaders to "work on being clear-headed persistent learners in the setting in which you work, because when you are immersed in action where ideas are being generated you learn a great deal."

## **8.6 Professional benefits of and challenges to adopting a continuing professional development approach to appraisal**

In this study, I was interested in identifying and examining challenges that may arise and benefits that could accrue from adopting a formative approach to appraisal. The following factors emerged in my analysis.

### **8.6.1 Professional challenges**

I needed to develop a deep understanding of the key elements of effective appraisal systems and how they might be operationalized to support improvements in pedagogy. This was a challenge, since at times there was “little available information that can offer decision makers both research evidence and practical examples to inform this work” (Darling Hammond, 2013, vii) I felt I was feeling my way through ambiguity and uncertainty.

This difficulty was most acute in investigating how to incorporate evidence of student learning in appraisals. Gathering and incorporating evidence in a more systematic way would make both teacher self-assessed and evaluator ratings more reliable, and could highlight areas of pedagogy that might be targeted to enhance student learning. I attest this is an indicator of the developmental nature of a new initiative and that practice would grow stronger over time helped by professional discussion and deliberate practice in gathering, assessing and matching evidence of student learning to applicable standards. An electronic teacher portal would also give teachers ownership of this process.

I believe that there is also an affective element to consider. Teachers may initially feel uncomfortable with their work being judged. I argue that given time and professional discussion evidence of student learning would become a feature of appraisals. Perhaps more teacher buy-in and trust in a new system was gained during this first year of implementation, as a result of the differentiated approach taken to the inclusion of evidence of student learning within appraisals. Some teachers shared more student work than others during and after observations and during appraisal discussions. I predict the situation would get stronger. Mandated state guidelines have helped fuelled growth in this area in the U.K. and U.S. From personal experience, I would suggest these practices seem slower to emerge in a systematic way in some international schools.



These challenges highlight the on-going need for principals' to continue their professional learning so they become aware of advances and new applications in the field. Principals' commitment to continually develop the competencies they need for this type of work is important, as surely no one principal possesses all the skills needed to thoroughly support the complexities of teaching and learning. Better understanding of strategies to enhance reflective practice may have been helpful in my interactions with Mark which illustrates that principals too must reflect in and on their practices in order to build a practical base of what works.

Pragmatically, I acknowledge that adopting this new system placed new demands on my time that competed with many others. However, as I came to appreciate the value and potential of appraisal to support teaching and learning, the process became a priority. I no longer view appraisal as an ineffectual series of discrete, often stilted, interviews and formal observations that entails filling out unmanageable forms. Now I see my role in appraisal as an opportunity for instructional leadership, and the process as part of an integrated approach to support teaching and learning.

### **8.6.2 Benefits**

The study yielded three major pragmatic benefits to my practice. Firstly, I now have a much more profound understanding of the value of appraisal and insights into how it might be operationalized to support growth at the individual and school level. I came to realize that appraisal is best conceptualized as one part of an integrated teaching and learning system comprising:

1. A strong written curriculum that details student learning objectives and progressions for teachers
2. Clear assessment guidelines and practices teachers use to both evaluate evidence of student learning and the impact their practice has on that learning
3. Standards for evaluating and guiding steps to refine and develop teachers' practice
4. Job-embedded professional learning opportunities provided at the individual and whole-school level to guide pedagogical improvements

(Darling-Hammond 2013)

Secondly, Fullan (2008, p. 30) refers to change occurring in three dimensions: "the possible use of new or revised materials, the possible use of new approaches and the possible alteration of beliefs (e.g., in pedagogical assumptions and theories)". This

empirical study resulted in changes in my practice along all three dimensions. I created and used a new appraisal tool based on Teaching Standards designed to reflect the developmental needs of the school at this point in time. I developed a restructured implementation process for appraisals that reflects a commitment to on-going teacher professional learning. I also experienced a significant alteration in my beliefs related to the purpose, scope and possible contributions an effective appraisal process can make to enhance pedagogy. These changes will shape my future practice with teacher appraisal. I have also developed an increased interest and commitment to 'getting it right.'

### **8.7 Unexpected outcomes of the study**

In addition to the findings highlighted above, several unexpected outcomes emerged from the study that contributed to the professional development of teachers. Engagement of teachers' invested in the process with their growth goals was surprisingly strong and sustained. All consistently worked on three self-chosen goals throughout the yearlong appraisal process. This points to the benefits of teachers focusing for example, on 3 manageable foci rather than requiring they simultaneously address improvements in all required competencies. Through modelling or teaching lessons for peers, providing suggestions for resources and/or approaches, colleagues greatly expanded the initiatives I initially introduced. This very positive outcome meant teachers gained access to new pedagogies, adopted the use of new resources and had a colleague who was interested and invested in the area to converse with and draw on. This highlights the benefits of adopting Fullan's (2008) 'tight-loose' strategy in planning professional development for teachers, where principals initiate learning engagements, are involved and intervene yet leave teachers free to share strategies and resources among themselves. The open pedagogically focused conversations I had with participants also resulted in my gaining a more nuanced understanding of teachers' capabilities and interests. This meant I could spread and share expertise and plan to distribute/share leadership for some initiatives, thereby providing additional professional development and leadership experiences for teachers.

Most surprising were the benefits accruing from the inclusion of an Instructional Rounds protocol (City et al. 2009, Roberts, 2012), which provided teachers with a formal framework to actualize standards related to collaborative practice. Comments from all four participants showed they viewed the initiative as positive, wanted it to continue and

offered suggestions about how they would like to see this operationalized. Teachers used the opportunity and context of Instructional Rounds to openly discuss important issues central to student learning.

Their comments during the group debrief meeting illustrated they had identified there was definite variation in the way learning intentions, success criteria, lesson structure and student engagement was being managed across classrooms. They were willing to discuss, debate and follow-up on these differences. Teachers expressed interest and pointed to potential benefits in pursuing more common practice in these areas across grades. Comments were direct and forthright. The strength and openness of these discussions lead me to consider if these judgments were accepted perhaps as they came from peers and whether they may have been rejected as judgmental had they originated from a principal.

Instructional Rounds opens up the possibility of teachers critiquing practice collaboratively and making judgments together about how they can collectively build on each other's practice to build capacity. This highlights the prospect of a shared purpose to professional learning and development that originates from teachers.

Additionally, the teacher with most limited buy-in to individual appraisal and most reluctant to trial strategies for improvement I'd suggested, was fully on-board in working collaboratively with his peers during Instructional Rounds. He was vocal in his suggestions about how future Rounds might be operationalized and a collective focus chosen. This points to the value of forming a link to teaching teams within appraisals as it highlights the ability of peers to support refinements in the practice of colleagues.

Pragmatically, an unanticipated consequence of this study has been the expansion of the use of the appraisal tool and process to teachers from kindergarten through grade twelve within the school. This occurred due to a request from the Head of School and has entailed communication with the heads of the secondary school departments and the kindergarten principal. The study has caused me to rethink and reinvent my understanding of the purpose and potential of teacher appraisal to support professional practice K-12.

## **8.8 Implications from the study**

A number of standards-based teacher evaluation rubrics exist that emphasize different aspects of professional practice. For schools to be able to determine the best research-based standards and indicators for their unique circumstances, further work to clarify and differentiate the potential impact of different standards would be helpful. Mielke (2012), in a recent doctoral study in the U.S., concluded that Marzano's framework offers a more precise, detailed guide for making improvements in classroom practice when compared to Danielson's. Since the claim came from a small-scale empirical study, however, further research is needed to support it. It would be helpful if comparative research could determine which standards and indicators of professional practice are most closely associated with gains in teaching and learning.

Classroom observations conducted during the study consisted of two formally pre-scheduled observations, class visits, Instructional Rounds, informal drop-ins and invitations to observe lessons. There is no consensus in the current literature on how observations should be conducted (see Marshall, 2013, Darling-Hammond 2013, Marzano, 2013). Determining the impact or contributions of the different approaches would also be beneficial.

Simultaneously focusing appraisal on both individuals and teams is still also relatively new, although (Darling Hammond, (2013) highlights that contributions to collegial activities in Singapore are weighted heavily in teacher evaluation. Published examples of ways appraisal systems can effectively take both into account would be helpful. More examples of methods for incorporating student learning into appraisals to promote further improvement would also be constructive for practitioners.

The study illustrates productive ways appraisal can be operationalized to promote capacity building in educational contexts. The challenge for principals is to learn to more effectively appraise and more productively support teachers' efforts to improve and for both parties to see real value in engaging in the process.

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**Appendix A**

**School's previous evaluation tool and process**

**GOALS OF EVALUATION PROCESS:**

To improve the quality of instruction with the understanding that everyone in the organization has a responsibility for continued professional growth.

To ensure an understanding of and active support for the philosophy and goals of the school.

**AIMS OF EVALUATION PROCESS:**

To enable teachers to focus on those areas of instruction and areas needing improvement which are consistent with the philosophy and goals of the school.

To enable administrators to focus on those areas of instruction and areas needing improvement which are consistent with the philosophy and goals of the school.

To collectively work towards an enhanced teaching-learning environment.

**RATIONALE:**

To respect the worth and dignity of individuals.

To provide feedback on individual performances.

To provide direction and assistance to teachers in their professional development e.g. in-service opportunities, attendance at professional workshops.

To base personnel decisions on objective data.

The Head of school, authorized by the Board of Directors, has the ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the evaluation policy. The elementary principal will provide supervision and evaluation of professional responsibilities. Principals may further delegate additional supervisory responsibilities.

**BELIEFS ABOUT THE EVALUATION PROGRAM:**

Effective delivery of educational services is valued highly.

Student growth and achievement are of paramount importance in the teaching-learning process.

The appraisal of a staff member's performance should be conducted in a climate of trust, confidence and support.

Formal evaluations are to be completed in written form. Each individual must be given an opportunity to discuss his/her formal written evaluation.

A formal evaluation is confidential. Data are held in the teacher's personnel record and are available for review by the administration and the specific teacher.

Staff members are encouraged to seek on-the-job assistance and consultation.

Staff evaluation is a continuous process.

Effective evaluation procedures provide for all involved in the program to have knowledge of the purposes, processes, expectations and other factors included in the system.

**TIMELINE:**

Formal evaluations may be written at any time during the school year. For a good

## Appendix A – School’s previous evaluation tool and process

reason, e.g. applying for another job, updating personnel file, taking new academic courses etc., a teacher may request a special written formal evaluation.

### EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

For implementation of evaluation process, there will be three instruments:

1. Classroom Observation
2. Professional Growth Plan
3. Formal Written Evaluation Plan

#### 1. CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS

Classroom observations may be informal and/or formal. *Informal observation* is basically drop-in visits, which may occur at any time and are probably unannounced. No observation instrument is required. Teachers will receive a copy of the formal evaluation instrument.

The observation instrument will consist of four divisions:

- (A) Instructional Strategies
- (B) Classroom Management and Organization
- (C) Presentation of Subject Matter
- (D) Learning Environment
- (E) School-level checklist

The important part of any lesson is whether or not the students achieved the objective(s) of the lesson. (See “*Classroom Observation Instrument*” for performance indicators in each area.)

#### 2. PROFESSIONAL GROWTH PLAN

Each teacher will prepare an annual professional growth plan at the beginning of the school year, which needs to be approved by the school principal. The growth plan will focus on three areas

- (A) School Priorities (School goals and themes)
- (B) Classroom instructional improvement priorities
- (C) Professional development priorities

#### 3. FORMAL WRITTEN EVALUATION REPORT

New teachers to the school will receive a formal written evaluation during the first year. A second year evaluation is at discretion of the Principal.

Teachers who have been at School for more than three years will receive a formal written evaluation every three years. If there is any exception to this, individual teachers will be notified of the exception.

All teachers should be prepared for supervisory visits throughout the school year. Classroom visits may be announced or unannounced. The teacher can depend on feedback following classroom observations.

Formal written evaluations will come from the principal and, if required, from the Head. Formal written evaluations will be based on information gathered from classroom observations, fulfilment of other professional responsibilities as well as other sources of objective data.

In addition to classroom observations, criteria related to fulfilment of personal and professional responsibilities will be used for the completion of the Formal Written Evaluation Report.

## Appendix A – School's previous evaluation tool and process

A. **Personal responsibilities** include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Demonstration of support for, and implementation of the philosophy and goals of International School (See Teachers' Handbook)

B. **Professional responsibilities** include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Committed to the improvement of teaching knowledge and skills
- b. Is prepared for class e.g. lesson plans, audio-visual equipment, materials etc.
- c. Works cooperatively with other staff members
- d. Participates in school-sponsored activities
- e. Participates actively and positively in curricula reviews
- f. Accepts extra-instructional responsibilities willingly
- g. Keeps abreast of new developments and ideas in their field
- h. Communicates with the administration on documents distributed beyond the school e.g. field trip letters, classroom announcements etc.
- i. Establishes cooperative rapport with parents
- j. Keeps parents informed regarding student progress, academic and behaviour
- k. Participates in some parent-sponsored school activities
- l. Maintains a good record of attendance and punctuality
- m. Accepts constructive criticism positively
- n. Understands and adheres to safety regulation
- o. Works closely with the support team and follows recommendations of appropriate specialist: nurse, special needs, or counsellor for adaptations in programs, teaching strategies, health concerns or behavioural plan.

## Appendix A – School's previous evaluation tool and process

### **CLASSROOM OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT**

TEACHER: \_\_\_\_\_  
OBSERVED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS/GR. LEVEL: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **A. INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

##### ***Performance indicators***

##### ***Notes***

- a. Appropriately varies activities
- b. Solicits student participation
- c. Extends students' responses/contributions
- d. Provides ample time for students to respond to questions/solicitations and to consider content as it is presented
- e. Implements instruction at an appropriate level of difficulty
- f. Communicates learning expectations
- g. Monitors student performance
- h. Provides corrective feedback, including reteaching

#### **B. CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION**

##### ***Performance indicators***

##### ***Notes***

- a. Secures student attention
- b. Uses time efficiently
- c. Gives clear directions for classroom
- d. Arranges room appropriately for activity
- e. Implements appropriate sequence of activities
- f. Maintains focus
- g. Keeps students engaged
- h. Applies rules consistently and fairly
- i. Uses techniques to stop inappropriate behaviour
- j. Reinforces desired behaviour



## **Appendix A – School’s previous evaluation tool and process**

### **C. PRESENTATION OF SUBJECT MATTER**

<b><i>Performance indicators</i></b>	<b><i>Notes</i></b>
a. Begins instruction/activity with an appropriate introduction	
b. Presents information in an appropriate sequence	
c. Relates concepts/skills to prior/future learning	
d. Explains content and/or learning tasks clearly	
e. Uses correct and acceptable written and oral English	

### **D. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

<b><i>Performance indicators</i></b>	<b><i>Notes</i></b>
a. Relates content to student interest/experience	
b. Challenges students	
c. Establishes a climate of courtesy and respect	
d. Avoids sarcasm and negative criticism	
e. Encourages reluctant students and students who experience difficulty coping with a regular program	

WAS THERE EVIDENCE THAT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE LESSON WERE MET?

**Appendix A – School’s previous evaluation tool and process**

**INFORMAL CLASSROOM OBSERVATION**

**CLASS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **TIME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What was actually going on with student participation and behaviour?**

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**Comments:**

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**Principal Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_











### **Elementary School Checklist**

A teacher employed at elementary school demonstrates and models the following responsibilities.

**Teacher's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

	Demonstrated Effectively	Not In Evidence
	←	→
1) Seeks information to further his/her knowledge of PYP through discussion with coordinator, colleagues and research.	←	→
2) Stays informed on school related news through emails and school newsletter.	←	→
3) Participates in on-going educational opportunities such as workshops, in-service faculty meetings and professional literature.	←	→
4) Displays the PYP profile and attitude words and students' work around the classroom.	←	→
5) Enforces the School's health and safety policies.	←	→
6) Maintains a clean and orderly learning environment for students.	←	→
7) Applies creativity in planning and delivery of lessons.	←	→
8) Strives to achieve personal and professional goals.	←	→
9) Supports the school goals and promotes a positive school spirit.	←	→
10) Supports and enforces the elementary agenda book guidelines.	←	→

## Appendix A – School’s previous evaluation tool and process

- 11) Communicates with parents through classroom newsletters, emails and informal/formal meetings. 
- 12) Shares thoughtful ideas and opinions during planning meetings. 
- 13) Express ideas, comments and concerns in a positive manner during faculty and planning meetings. 
- 14) Approaches new ideas with confidence 
- 15) Adheres to deadlines and due dates set by principal. (e.g. Report cards, submitting information) 
- 16) Is prompt and attentive to scheduled duties and responsibilities (attendance, recess, cafeteria, bus, teacher arrival by 8 A.M., departure after 4 P.M.) 
- 17) Demonstrates integrity, honesty and fairness with peers, administration and students. 
- 18) Demonstrates support of service and action-oriented school activities. 
- 19) Volunteers to organize, coordinate and support extra-curriculum programs for students. 
- 20) Maintains a calm and professional attitude in stressful and challenging situations. 

**Teacher’s comment:**

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## **Appendix B**

### **Performance Development Program**

#### Performance Standards Handbook

#### **Introduction**

The Performance Standards Handbook sets out eight fundamental standards that will drive the performance and the professional development of each individual faculty member, and the faculty as a whole. Performance indicators – the specific skills that together comprise the standard accompany each standard.

The Handbook is to be used by teachers to first reflect on the quality of their instructional skills, and then specific standards and skills where they believe that improvement is required.

Each teacher will use the Handbook to self-assess their current performance and:

- Identify specific standards and skills where performance improvement is required; and,
- Identify specific areas where professional development is required.
- This document includes diagrams, which describe each of these steps.

#### **Performance development**

The Performance Development Program is comprised of 3 essential steps which require that each faculty member:

- *Begin the school year* with clear performance objectives and professional development goals for the coming school year;
- *Complete a mid – year performance dialogue* with his or her principal so that both can gauge the faculty member's progress against these objectives and goals, and identify specific areas where further development and support is required;
- *Complete a year – end performance dialogue* with his or her immediate principal to assess the faculty member's progress against the performance objectives and professional development goals agreed at the beginning of the school year.

#### **Performance criteria**

The Performance Development Program sets out performance criteria that the school considers essential to the achievement of the school's mission and the activation of the Student and Teacher Profile.

## **Appendix B   Performance Development Program Performance Standards Handbook**

*Setting high standards and supporting student achievement* is a group of eight criteria which focus on teacher's interaction and engagement with his or her students as learning and growth goals are established and progress measured, as specific learning needs are identified, and as success is recognized and celebrated.

These criteria have been drawn from a variety of public sources and have been adapted to the school's specific needs and culture. The performance criteria will be reviewed from time to time by the Leadership Team to ensure that they remain relevant to the school's curriculum, and to the development of our students and faculty.

### **Setting performance objectives and goals**

Performance objectives and goals should emerge naturally from the most recent performance review (i.e., the teacher's current standing for each criteria), and should ensure that the teacher aspires to higher levels of performance. For example, a teacher who is at a *Basic* level on a particular criteria should have as an objective the achievement of a *Proficient* level at the end of the next review.

Performance objectives and goals should be *restricted to the most essential*, and should be limited in number.

The agreed performance objectives and goals are recorded in the Performance Dialogue form, and serve as the anchor point for the mid – year and year – end reviews.

Performance objectives and goals can be adjusted to reflect professional development or other factors during the course of the year. The most appropriate time to consider any such adjustments is at the mid – year review.

### **Setting professional development goals**

Professional development goals and support programs must drive tangible improvements in the performance of the teacher and most importantly, the achievement of student learning and growth goals.

Professional development goals should emerge naturally from the most recent performance review (i.e., the teacher's current standing for each criteria), and should ensure that the teacher aspires to higher levels of performance.

Once the teacher has completed the Performance Dialogue form, the teacher and his or her principal meet to discuss the completed self – assessment.

Dialogue between each faculty member and his or her immediate principal is essential to ensure that there is early alignment regarding the type of coaching and support is required during the course of the year.

The agreed professional development goals and support programs are recorded in the Performance Dialogue form, and serve as the anchor point for the mid – year and year – end reviews.

## **Appendix B   Performance Development Program Performance Standards Handbook**

### **The mid – year performance dialogue**

The mid – year performance dialogue is an important opportunity for the teacher and his or her principal to review and assess the teacher's progress against the performance objectives and the professional development goals agreed at the beginning of the school year.

### **The year – end performance dialogue**

The *year - end performance* dialogue is an important opportunity for the teacher to review and assess his or her performance against the performance objectives and professional development goals that were agreed at the beginning of the school year.

### **Performance measures**

Four categories of performance are used to assess where teachers are currently positioned in each performance standard, and to establish performance objectives for the school year. These benchmarks are also relevant to the consideration of professional development goals, which is addressed later in this document.

*Unsatisfactory* indicates that the teacher does not have the knowledge and / or skills required to fulfill the criteria, or applies his or her knowledge and skills inconsistently.

*Basic* indicates that the teacher has the essential knowledge and / or skills required, but requires additional effort to complete and assess the effectiveness of the steps required by the criteria.

*Proficient* indicates that the teacher has the essential knowledge and skills required, applies these consistently, and measures or assesses the effect on student learning and growth goals.

*Distinguished* indicates not only the teacher's mastery of knowledge and skills, but reflects the recognition by the school that the teacher is a leader and role model for this particular criteria. Teachers who are considered distinguished in a particular area play an important role in supporting other teachers who are trying to improve their mastery of these same criteria.

**Setting annual performance and development objectives**

Step 1: Reflect on your performance against each standard.

*Circle the performance level which best describes your current practice.*



Step 2: Identify the critical skills where you believe improvement in performance is required.

*Identify the top 2 or 3 skills, which you believe are most important to drive improved performance.*

*Separately. Describe the professional development you require.*



Step 3: Discuss your assessment with your principal and set annual performance and professional development objectives.

*Review the results of your self-assessment with your principal. Agree and set your professional development objectives.*



**Completing the interim review**

Step 1: Reflect on your performance against your annual objectives and goals.

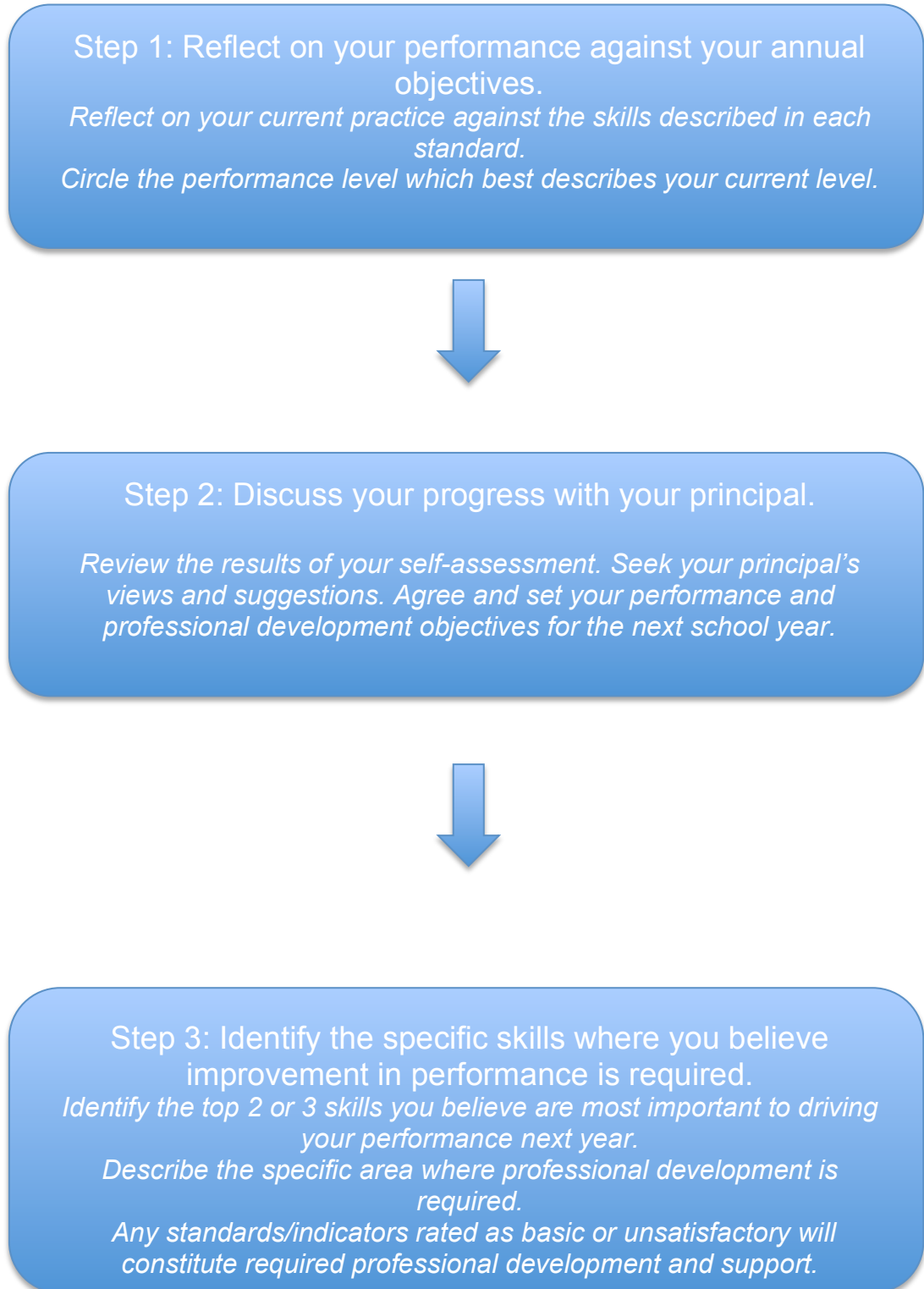
*Reflect on the professional development used to support your performance objectives.*



Step 2: Discuss your progress with your principal

*Review the results of your self-assessment with your principal. Seek your principal's views and suggestions. Determine together whether any adjustment is required to your performance and professional development objectives.*

**Completing the annual review**



**Figure A1 Full Performance Development Process**

**Appendix B Performance Development Program**  
**Performance Standards Handbook**

**Table A1 Performance Development Standards**

<b>Standard 1: Student Learning and Achievement</b>			
Centering instruction on high expectations for student learning and achievement			
1. Sets high standards for achievement by developing and communicating clear daily learning targets and / or longer-term goals with appropriate scales/rubrics.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not set daily learning targets or longer-term goals, or does so only occasionally.	Provides learning targets and goals, but does not provide scales or rubrics that describe or measure performance.	Provides clear learning targets and goals, with performance scales or rubrics.  Monitors student understanding of targets and performance measures.	A recognized leader and role model who develops and applies new strategies for students who do not understand or respond to targets, goals and performance measures.

<b>Standard 2: Instructional Practices</b>			
Demonstrating effective teaching practices.			
11. Uses a variety of instructional strategies and resources to encourage student engagement, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not use various types of instructional strategies and appropriate resources to achieve instructional goals and teach students critical thinking skills.  Does not monitor student engagement nor does apply reengagement strategies as needed.	Assures student growth with frequent instructional opportunities for students to use critical thinking and problem solving skills.  Monitors student engagement. Applies re-engagement strategies as needed.  Does not monitor if strategies have their desired effect.	Effectively applies a range of instructional techniques that require students to think critically and problem solve.  Monitors student engagement and applies reengagement strategies as needed.  Monitors the extent to which strategies have their desired effect.	Frequently uses a range of instructional techniques that require critical thinking.  Offers constructive assistance and models the use of strategies, materials and technology to maximize learning.  Applies and monitors new strategies for students who do not respond to typical strategies.

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<b>2. Uses a variety of grouping techniques to support learning.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Distinguished</b>
Does not use a variety of individual and cooperative learning activities to promote critical thinking skills.	Uses a variety of learning situations such as independent, small group and whole class to enhance individual and collective thinking skills.	Effectively combines flexible and varied independent, cooperative and whole-class learning situations. Applies grouping strategies to maximize student understanding and learning.	Models and / or shares with others the effective use of flexible and varied independent, collaborative and whole-class learning situations.
<b>3. Uses questioning and discussion techniques to deepen student understanding.</b>			
<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Basic</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Distinguished</b>
<p>Questions are of low cognitive challenge, with single correct response, asked in rapid succession.</p> <p>Discussion is between the teacher and students. Students are not invited to speak directly to one another.</p> <p>Teacher does not probe students to explain their thinking.</p> <p>Only a few students participate in the discussion.</p>	<p>Questions lead students through a single path of inquiry.</p> <p>Many students have a single correct response. Students are called on quickly.</p> <p>Students are invited to engage in discussion, to respond to one another, and to explain their thinking, but only some students attempt to do so.</p>	<p>Uses open-ended questions, inviting students to think and/or offer multiple possible answers.</p> <p>Makes effective use of wait time.</p> <p>Discussions enable students to talk to one another without ongoing mediation by teacher.</p> <p>Calls on most students, even those who don't initially volunteer. Many students actively engage in the discussion.</p> <p>Asks students to justify their reasoning, and most attempt to do so.</p>	<p>A recognized leader and role model who uses a variety or series of questions or prompts to challenge students cognitively, advance high-level thinking and discourse and prompt metacognition.</p> <p>Students formulate many questions, initiate topics, and challenge one another's thinking.</p> <p>Virtually all students are engaged in the discussion.</p>

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4. Identifies appropriate academic vocabulary and methods relevant to the subject and to learning targets and uses various strategies for student acquisition.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not identify important academic vocabulary specific to the lesson or does so in a manner that does not reflect the critical content.	<p>Identifies important academic vocabulary specific to the lesson and makes students aware of the meaning of these terms.</p> <p>Does not monitor whether students have internalized the meaning of these terms using their own background knowledge.</p>	<p>Identifies important academic vocabulary specific to the lesson and makes students aware of the meaning of these terms.</p> <p>Monitors the extent to which students have internalized the meaning of these terms using their own background knowledge.</p>	A recognized leader and role model who adapts or creates new strategies to meet the specific needs of students for whom the typical application of strategies does not produce the desired effect.

<b>Standard 3: Differentiation</b> Recognizing individual student learning needs, while developing and adapting teaching strategies to address the needs of all pupils.			
1. Uses observations and data to plan and provide interventions to support student learning.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Does not recognize students who have special learning needs.</p> <p>Does not know nor understand the Referral Process.</p> <p>Does not use the intervention system to address student needs.</p>	<p>Recognizes need for intervention and identifies strategies that meet the needs of ELL and students not reaching full potential.</p> <p>Does not ensure that all identified students are adequately served by the interventions.</p>	Identifies and effectively employs and monitors interventions that meet the specific needs of ELL and students not reaching full potential.	A recognized leader who helps others employ and monitor interventions that meet the specific needs of ELL and students not reaching full potential.

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2. Establishes and monitors the achievement of appropriate growth goals to support EAL students and students not reaching full potential.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Does not establish growth goals or sets inappropriate goals for students not reaching full learning potential.</p> <p>Does not use multiple high – quality data sources to monitor, adjust and evaluate achievement of goals.</p> <p>Does not provide students with feedback on their current status in relation to their learning targets or growth goals.</p>	<p>Establishes growth goals for students not reaching full learning potential, but does not use multiple high –quality data sources to monitor, adjust and evaluate achievement of goals.</p> <p>Provides students with feedback on their current status but not their knowledge / achievement gain relative to the learning goal.</p>	<p>Establishes growth goals for students not reaching full learning potential, and uses multiple high – quality data sources to monitor, adjust and evaluate achievement of goals.</p> <p>Provides students with feedback on their current status and their knowledge gain relative to the learning goal.</p> <p>Monitors whether students are motivated to enhance their status.</p>	<p>A recognized leader and role model who consistently celebrates individual, group and class achievements. A recognized leader and role model who ensures students' full learning potential is reached.</p> <p>Uses multiple high – quality data sources to monitor, adjust and evaluate achievement of goals.</p> <p>Collaborates with students, parents and other school staff to maximize results.</p>

Standard 4: Subject Matter & Curriculum Providing a clear and intentional focus on subject matter and curriculum.			
1. Demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the subject taught.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Does not demonstrate adequate knowledge of the discipline and / or the standards for the discipline.</p>	<p>Demonstrates an acceptable but incomplete knowledge of the discipline and /or the standards for the discipline.</p>	<p>Demonstrates a solid knowledge of the important concepts of the discipline and how these relate to one another.</p> <p>Demonstrates a solid knowledge of the standards for the discipline.</p>	<p>A recognized leader who helps others understand the discipline and the standards for the discipline.</p> <p>Displays extensive knowledge of the important concepts of the discipline, how these relate both to one another and other disciplines.</p>

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2. Employs research and inquiry methodologies pertinent to the discipline.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not introduce students to various methods of inquiry and research methodologies.	Employs student inquiry instructional approaches to build capacity for all students on research methodologies.	Develops strategies to engage students in the process of inquiry and research pertinent to the discipline being taught.	A recognized leader and role model who shares new knowledge on inquiry and research methods that improve student learning.
3. Implements meaningful interdisciplinary instruction and supports the development of transdisciplinary skills (thinking, social, communication, self management, and research).			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not make interdisciplinary connections during instruction.  Does not actively support or expand students' use and development of trans - disciplinary skills.	Implements interdisciplinary learning experiences that require students to apply disciplinary knowledge.  Builds capacity by actively supporting and expanding students use and development of trans – disciplinary skills.	Develops and implements meaningful interdisciplinary projects that guide students in analyzing the complexities of an issue or question using perspectives from varied disciplines.  Develops strategies to expand student use of trans – disciplinary skills, and monitors students' progress.	A recognized leader who helps others connect current interdisciplinary themes to their discipline(s).  Weaves themes into meaningful learning experiences through collaboration with students, colleagues and / or real world partners.
4. Incorporates diverse social and cultural perspectives in teaching and learning.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not facilitate students' ability to develop balanced, diverse social and cultural perspectives.  Does not recognize presence of personal bias in lesson design.	Designs instruction that incorporates global perspectives and national / ethnic / cultural contributions and differences in the discipline.	Builds background knowledge from a variety of perspectives critical to fostering innovation and solving global challenges.	A recognized leader and role model who facilitates student action to address real-world problems from a variety of perspectives that improves their community and/or world.

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**Standard 5: Learning Environment**

Fosters and manages a learning environment that encourages active engagement in learning, positive social interaction and self-motivation.

1. Builds positive, respectful relationships with students by understanding their backgrounds and interests.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not use the strategy when it is required, or uses the strategy incorrectly.  Considers student background and interests only when conflict occurs.	Minimally uses students' interests and background during interactions with students.	Uses students' interests and backgrounds during interactions with students and monitors the sense of community in the classroom.	A recognized leader and role model who applies understanding of student interests and backgrounds to maximize student engagement.
2. Values and respects the engagement and contributions of all students.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not use verbal or nonverbal expressions of value and respect for students.	Infrequent or inconsistent use of verbal and nonverbal expressions of value and respect for students, with particular attention to those with specific learning needs.	Regularly uses verbal and nonverbal expressions of value and respect for students with particular attention to those with specific learning needs.  Monitors the quality of relationships in the classroom.	A recognized leader and role model who adapts, creates and shares new strategies to meet the specific needs of students who do not respond to typical strategies.



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3. Organizes a safe physical layout of the classroom to focus on learning.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Classroom space is unexciting and sterile.</p> <p>Displays of student work are minimal or dated.</p> <p>Organization of room demands that students always remain at same table.</p> <p>Resources provided solely by the teacher for specific pre-planned lessons.</p>	<p>Classroom space is generally inviting and well organized.</p> <p>Teacher generated displays and displays of student work are current.</p> <p>Use of room space ensures safety, and facilitates some movement.</p>	<p>Classroom space is inviting, stimulating well organized.</p> <p>Displays demonstrate individual achievement and ongoing learning.</p> <p>Students switch to room spaces appropriate to different learning engagements.</p> <p>Resources are easily accessible and respected by students.</p> <p>Monitors if classroom space supports student learning.</p>	<p>A recognized leader and role model who establishes and maintains environments to maximize student learning and engagement.</p>
4. Effectively manages student behavior and classroom procedures.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Does not use the strategy when it is required, or uses it incorrectly or with parts missing.</p>	<p>Establishes and reviews expectations regarding agreements, rules and procedures.</p> <p>Acknowledges adherence. Addresses infractions, but not in a consistent and fair manner.</p>	<p>Jointly creates and reviews expectations regarding agreements, rules and procedures with students.</p> <p>Acknowledges adherence, addresses infractions in a consistent and fair manner, and monitors the affects on students' behavior.</p>	<p>A recognized leader and role model who adapts, creates and shares new strategies to meet the specific needs of students who do not respond to typical strategies.</p>

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<b>Standard 6: Student Assessment</b> Uses multiple student data to modify instruction and improve student learning, makes accurate and productive use of assessment			
<b>1. Designs instruction aligned to assessment.</b>			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not design instruction with clear alignment to daily learning targets and / or longer term learning goals.	Designs instruction aligned to daily learning targets and / or longer term learning goals, but does not adapt those assessments to meet student learning needs.	Designs instruction with assessments aligned to clearly stated daily learning target and / or longer term learning goals.  Assessments are adapted to meet student learning needs.	A recognized leader and role model who adapts, creates and shares new strategies to meet the specific needs of students who do not respond to typical strategies.
<b>2. Uses multiple data elements (pre-assessment, formative and summative assessments) to plan and modify instruction and assessment.</b>			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not examine multiple data points with the intent of modifying instruction and assessment or does so with significant errors or omissions.	Examines a few data points and makes minimal adjustments to instruction and assessment based on the information.	Examines multiple data points and makes changes to instruction and assessment based on the information.  Monitors the extent to which the changes result in enhanced student learning.	A recognized leader and role model who adapts, creates and shares new strategies to meet the specific needs of students who do not respond to typical strategies.
<b>3. Provides opportunities for students to self-reflect, track progress toward learning goals.</b>			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not help students understand the importance of taking personal responsibility for their learning.	Uses strategies to enable students to set-short and long-term goals helping them to organize and reflect on their own learning.	Uses strategies to help students evaluate and modify learning goals based on performance data.  Recognizes the value of peer feedback, and encourages students to give peers appropriate feedback.	A recognized leader and role model who adapts, creates and shares new strategies that enable students to expand and assume control of their own learning.

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4. Establishes student growth goals and measures achievement of growth goals through observation and assessment, achievement of student growth goals.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Does not establish student growth goals or establishes inappropriate goals for whole class.</p> <p>Does not identify multiple sources of data to monitor, adjust and evaluate achievement of goals.</p> <p>Data from a least two points in time shows no evidence of growth for most students.</p>	<p>Establishes appropriate student growth goals for whole class.</p> <p>Goals identify some sources of data to monitor, adjust and evaluate achievement.</p> <p>Data from sources at least two points in time show evidence of growth for some students.</p>	<p>Establishes appropriate student growth goals for whole class.</p> <p>Goals identify multiple sources of data to monitor, adjust and evaluate achievement of goals.</p> <p>Data from multiple sources at least two points in time show evidence of growth for most students.</p>	<p>A recognized leader and role model who establishes appropriate student growth goals in collaboration with students and parents.</p> <p>Goals align to school mission. Multiple data sources used to monitor, adjust and assess achievement.</p> <p>Data from at least two points in time show evidence of high growth for all or most students.</p>

Standard 7: Effective Communication			
Communicates and collaborates with parents/guardians and the school community			
1. Promotes positive interactions with students and parents / guardians regarding programs, courses and school events.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Makes no attempt to perform these activities, or attempts to perform this activity but does not actually complete or follow through with these attempts.</p>	<p>Attempts to communicate and collaborate with parents, guardians, school and community regarding programs, courses and school events relevant to the students but does not necessarily do so in a timely or clear manner.</p>	<p>Communicates and collaborates with parents, guardians, school and community regarding programs, courses and school events relevant to the students' in a timely and professional manner.</p>	<p>A recognized leader and role model who helps others communicate and collaborate with parents, guardians, school and community regarding programs, courses and school events.</p>

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**Performance Standards Handbook**

2. Communicates individual student progress to parents/guardians in a timely and professional manner.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Makes no attempt to perform this activity or attempts to perform this activity but does not actually complete or follow through with these attempts.	Communicates individual students' progress to parents / guardians, but does not necessarily do so in a timely or clear manner.	Communicates individual students' progress to parents /guardians in a timely and professional manner.	A recognized leader and role model who helps others communicate individual student progress to parents /guardians in a timely and professional manner.
3. Models effective verbal, written and other media communication techniques with students and families to foster active inquiry, collaboration and supportive interaction.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not use effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills.  Does not actively support or expand learner expression in speaking, writing, listening and other media.	Consistently uses and fosters effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills.  Develops students in directing their own safe, free and respectful expression in speaking, writing, listening and other media.	Evaluates the impact of and strategies for effective use of verbal and non-verbal communication.  Promotes respect, safe and free expression in the school and community.	A recognized leader and role model who shares strategies for effective verbal and non-verbal communication in school and throughout the community.  Promotes respect, safe and free expression in the school and community.
4. Models effective use of technology and media communication tools to enhance learning, adheres to Acceptable Use Policy.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Does not demonstrate knowledge and understanding of technology and media communication tools for purposeful instruction. Does understand importance of the ethical and safe use of the internet as outlined in Acceptable Use Policy.	Implements instruction that encourages technology and media communication tools used for learning and models those techniques.  Demonstrates ethical and safe use of the internet by adherence to Acceptable Use Policy.	Facilitates students' effective use of technology and media communication tools.  Knows and upholds Acceptable Use Policy.	A recognized leader and role model who mentors or assists students and members of the school and community in the use of technology and media communication tools.  Champions the tenets of Acceptable Use Policy, and encourages others to do so. Contributes to policy refinement.

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**Performance Standards Handbook**

**Standard 8: Professionalism**

Exhibits collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning, fulfills wider professional responsibilities

**1. Collaborates with colleagues to enhance teaching and learning.**

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
Makes no attempt to perform this activity, or attempts to perform this activity but does not actually complete or follow through with these attempts.	Seeks help and mentorship from colleagues regarding specific classroom strategies and / or mentors other teachers, but does not necessarily effective in enhancing pedagogical skills.	Seeks help and mentorship from colleagues regarding specific classroom strategies and / or mentors others teachers in such a manner as to enhance pedagogical skill.	A recognized leader who mentors others in order to enhance their pedagogical skill.

**2. Pursues professional development based on written growth and development plan, professional reflection, and monitors progress.**

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Demonstrates little evidence of reflective practice and action in any of the standards established herein.</p> <p>Makes no attempt to perform this activity, or attempts to perform this activity but does not actually complete or follow through with these attempts.</p> <p>Does not actively pursue professional development.</p>	<p>Demonstrates some reflective practice and action.</p> <p>Develops a written professional growth and development plan but goals and timelines are not clear. Charts progress but does not adapt as needed.</p> <p>Occasionally pursues PD and in-service training. Sometimes shares learning with peers.</p>	<p>Engages in consistent and effective reflective practice and action.</p> <p>Develops professional growth and development plan with clear goals and timelines. Charts progress and adapts as needed.</p> <p>Actively pursues PD and in-service training.</p> <p>Shares learning with peers.</p>	<p>A recognized leader and role model who demonstrate reflective practice, and actively helps others develop professional growth and development plans.</p>

**Appendix B Performance Development Program  
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3. Displays dependability by adhering to professional responsibilities and through active participation in school community.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Makes little or no attempt to adhere to professional responsibilities and with established policies and practices.</p> <p>Does not maintain effective relationships with colleagues. Is not respectful and open to others' professional judgments and needs.</p>	<p>Attempts to follow professional responsibilities and established policies and practices but does not comply with all commitments.</p> <p>Generally maintains effective relationships with colleagues.</p> <p>Usually respectful and open to others' professional judgments and needs.</p>	<p>Fulfills professional responsibilities and follows established policies and practices, contributing to the overall effectiveness of the learning community.</p> <p>Is receptive and open to the ideas, professional judgments and needs of colleagues.</p>	<p>Consistently models established norms and collective commitments, is a recognized leader who facilitates and helps resolve team and group conflict.</p>
4. Models the skills and attitudes of the Student and Teacher Profile, supports the school's Guiding Principles.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p>Does not know nor understand the importance of Guiding Principles, Student and Teacher Profile.</p> <p>Makes little or no attempt to support the school's written objectives.</p>	<p>Has an evolving understanding of Guiding Principles.</p> <p>Models the skills and attitudes of the Student and Teacher Profile.</p> <p>Supports the school's guiding principles.</p>	<p>Consistently supports Guiding Principles.</p> <p>Demonstrates the skills and attitudes of the Student and Teacher Profile effectively and consistently.</p>	<p>A recognized leader and role model who consistently supports Guiding Principles, and embodies the skills and attitudes of the Student and Teacher Profile.</p>

## **Appendix C**

### **Performance Standards**

*Please refer to the examples given below each Standard for the types of documentation, materials and other evidence that can be used as supporting evidence for the standards in dialogue with your principal. This is not an exhaustive list; you may have other examples or artifacts that are relevant.*

#### **Standard 1: Student Learning and Achievement**

Centering instruction on high expectations for student learning and achievement

1. Sets high standards for achievement by developing and communicating clear daily learning targets and / or longer-term goals with appropriate scales/rubrics.

#### Possible Evidence of Practice

- Student learning objectives posted in classrooms
- Students demonstrate ability to articulate learning objective & purpose
- IEP conferences/reports
- Teacher generated rubrics
- Student/Teacher generated rubrics

**Appendix C Performance Standards**  
**Examples of documentation and evidence aligned to Standards**

**Standard 2: Instructional Practices**

Demonstrating effective teaching practices.

1. Uses a variety of instructional strategies and resources to encourage student engagement, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.
2. Uses a variety of grouping techniques to support learning.
3. Uses questioning and discussion techniques to deepen student understanding.
4. Identifies appropriate academic vocabulary and methods relevant to the subject and to learning targets and uses various strategies for student acquisition.

Possible Evidence of Practice

- Lesson/unit plan
- Differentiated lessons/units
- Homework assignments and guiding instructions
- Student completion data on homework/projects
- Student reflection/journals
- Student work samples & portfolios
- Data on academic vocabulary use
- Student assessment data
- Non-academic records of individual progress (participation, engagement, motivation, behavior, etc.)
- Academic records of individual student progress
- Flexible grouping plans
- Bulletin boards
- Agenda/meeting notes from grade level/content area team
- Student discussions/questions, feedback & comments



**Appendix C Performance Standards**  
**Examples of documentation and evidence aligned to Standards**

**Standard 3: Differentiation**

Recognizing individual student learning needs, while developing and adapting teaching strategies to address the needs of all pupils.

1. Uses observations and data to plan and provide interventions to support student learning.
2. Establishes and monitors the achievement of appropriate growth goals to support EAL students and students not reaching full potential

Possible Evidence of Practice

- Tiered/differentiated lessons/units & instructional records
- Student inventories - interest, learning style, multiple intelligence, developmental
- Planned interventions
- Research documentation log
- Rubrics/scoring guides
- Student work/rubric displays
- Student work samples, products/projects
- Student planners, reflection, journals
- Individual student records and assessment data
- Performance assessments
- IEP Performance/growth reports
- Non-academic records of individual progress (participation, engagement, motivation, behavior, etc.)
- Academic records of individual student progress
- Observation & verification of student mastery
- Flexible grouping plans & classroom environment
- Substitute teacher plan
- Bulletin board(s)
- Posted behavioral norms/class procedures
- Communications
- Agenda - collaborative meeting
- IEP conferences/reports
- Counselor reports!

**Appendix C Performance Standards**  
**Examples of documentation and evidence aligned to Standards**

**Standard 4: Subject Matter & Curriculum**

Providing a clear and intentional focus on subject matter and curriculum.

1. Demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the subject taught and the standards for the subject.
2. Employs research and inquiry methodologies pertinent to the discipline.
3. Implements meaningful interdisciplinary instruction and supports the development of transdisciplinary skills (thinking, social, communication, self management, and research).
4. Incorporates diverse social and cultural perspectives in teaching and learning.

Possible Evidence of Practice

- Lesson/unit plan
- Tiered/differentiated lessons/units
- Learning activities plan
- Student learning expectations & objectives
- Homework assignments and guiding instructions
- Student work samples, projects & portfolios
- Student discussions, questions, feedback/comments
- Student reflection/journals
- Student completion data on homework/projects
- Data on academic vocabulary use
- Research integration plan
- Praxis scores
- Observation & verification of student mastery
- Non-academic records of individual progress (participation, engagement, motivation, behavior, etc.)
- Academic records of individual student progress
- Performance assessments & data
- IEP Performance/growth reports
- Agenda/meeting notes from grade level/content area team
- Flexible grouping plans
- Parent/guardian outreach
- Bulletin boards
- IEP Conferences/reports

**Appendix C Performance Standards**  
**Examples of documentation and evidence aligned to Standards**

**Standard 5: Learning Environment**

Fosters and manages a learning environment that encourages active engagement in learning, positive social interaction and self-motivation.

1. Builds positive, respectful relationships with students by understanding their backgrounds and interests.
2. Values and respects the engagement and contributions of all students.
3. Organizes a safe physical layout of the classroom to focus on learning.
4. Effectively manages student behavior and classroom procedures.

Possible Evidence of Practice

- Classroom routines and procedures
- Classroom routines, procedures, and expectations for behavior, communication to parents/guardians
- Classroom management techniques preserving instructional time
- Observation/examples of Student feedback/comments
- Completed homework/projects trend data
- Student reflections/journal data
- Classroom discipline/incident report analysis trend data
- Non-instructional records of individual student progress (participation, engagement, motivation, behavior, etc.)
- Staff survey
- Attendance data
- IEP reports
- Parent/community outreach and engagement summary

**Appendix C Performance Standards**  
**Examples of documentation and evidence aligned to Standards**

**Standard 6: Student Assessment**

Uses multiple student data to modify instruction and improve student learning, makes accurate and productive use of assessment

1. Designs instruction aligned to assessment.
2. Uses multiple data elements (pre-assessment, formative and summative assessments) to plan and modify instruction and assessment.
3. Provides opportunities for students to self-reflect, track progress toward learning goals.
4. Establishes student growth goals and measures achievement of growth goals through observation and assessment, achievement of student growth goals.

Possible Evidence of Practice

- Unit instructional plan including assessment
- Tiered/differentiated lesson designs
- Tiered/differentiated assessments
- Lessons/units amended based on data analysis (examples of both)
- Example of analysis of student learning needs
- Formal/information assessments
- Instructional/assessment record management system
- Scoring guides/rubrics
- Student progress reports
- Examples of communication/feedback to students about their work/progress
- Communication logs to parents/guardians
- Sample parent response sheets
- Parent/guardian communication examples
- Presentation materials
- Professional development attendance record/sign-in sheet
- Mentor log
- Grade level/content area meeting notes and agenda
- Building/district professional learning community log/agenda

**Appendix C Performance Standards**  
**Examples of documentation and evidence aligned to Standards**

<b>Standard 7: Effective Communication</b> Communicates and collaborates with parents/guardians and the school community
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Promotes positive interactions with students and parents/guardians regarding programs, courses and school events.</li> <li>2. Communicates individual student progress to parents/guardians in a timely and professional manner.</li> <li>3. Models effective verbal, written and other media communication techniques with students and families to foster active inquiry, collaboration and supportive interaction.</li> <li>4. Models effective use of technology and media communication tools to enhance learning, adheres to the school's Acceptable Use Policy.</li> </ol>
Possible Evidence of Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posted communications – bulletin boards, norms, routines, procedures, etc.</li> <li>• Parent/community outreach materials</li> <li>• Lesson plans/activities</li> <li>• Email, newsletters, memos, websites, announcements, reports, etc.</li> <li>• Student assignments/Instructions</li> <li>• Strategies for ELL Students</li> <li>• Samples of effective communication</li> <li>• Grade level/content area team meeting notes and agendas</li> <li>• Professional development presentations and materials</li> </ul>

**Appendix C Performance Standards**  
**Examples of documentation and evidence aligned to Standards**

**Standard 8: Professionalism**

Exhibits collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning, fulfills wider professional responsibilities

1. Collaborates with colleagues to enhance teaching and learning.
2. Pursues professional development based on written growth and development plan, professional reflection, and monitors progress.
3. Displays dependability by adhering to professional responsibilities and through active participation in school community.
4. Models the skills and attitudes of the Student and Teacher Profile, supports the school's Guiding Principles.

Possible Evidence of Practice

- Agendas, output from meetings with peers to share learning (student lesson plans, activities, assignments and instructions, ELL student strategies, samples of effective communication, etc.)
- Posted communications—bulletin boards, norms, routines, procedures, etc.
- Parent/community outreach materials
- Email, newsletters, memos, websites, announcements, reports, etc.
- Grade level/content area team meeting notes and agendas
- Professional development presentations and materials
- Materials, data and other evidence for self– reflection, monitoring of progress against growth and development plan.

## **Appendix D**

### **Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form**

#### **Preparing your self – assessment**

1. Circle the level that you believe reflects your performance against the indicators for each standard. Provide a brief explanation of the rating that you have given yourself in the attached form.
2. Where appropriate, provide examples, documentation or other evidence to support your assessment.
3. Identify the specific standard and / or indicators that you believe are most critical to improving your overall performance during the next school year.
4. Prepare your Educator Growth Plan. Identify your professional development goals for next year and set out your strategy for achieving these.

#### **Preparing for your dialogue**

1. Set a date and time for your dialogue with your principal.
2. Provide a copy of your self – assessment and your Educator Growth Plan so that your principal has the opportunity to review this before the dialogue takes place.
3. Bring any materials (see 2 above) that you believe are relevant to your self – assessment, and be prepared to briefly talk your supervisor through these materials.

## Appendix D Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form

### Completing the assessment process

1. (Annual and Interim Reviews) Discuss your assessment and your growth plan with your supervisor, and consider whether any changes or adjustments are required to your self – assessment or to your Educator Growth Plan.
2. Agree any changes or adjustments with your supervisor, and finalize your Educator Growth Plan.

### Self - Assessment

Teacher: Rachel

Supervisor: Sandra Mulligan

**Table A2 Rachel's Performance Development Documentation**

<b>Standard 1: Student Learning and Achievement</b>			
<i>Centering instruction on high expectations for student learning and achievement</i>			
1. Sets high standards for achievement by developing and communicating clear daily learning targets and / or longer-term goals with appropriate scales/rubrics.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic >>>>>>>>	Proficient	Distinguished
<u>Teacher's appraisal</u>  <i>(Provide a brief explanation for your self - appraisal; provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)</i>  I need to start posting the learning objectives in the room, in order for the class to have an explicit idea of what they are learning. I feel that they usually have a good idea of what they are learning or what they are working on as a reader, writer, mathematician etc. and can usually verbalize it, but that probably isn't consistent throughout the entire class, throughout each day. They do set goals for each subject so they should know what they are working towards. I have not used any teacher & student co-constructed rubrics. I need to start doing that. However they have used commercially produced math and writing rubrics (Everyday Math program, Write Traits). After a unit they revisit assessments and goals to reflect on their knowledge growth. I would like to come up with a good system for this.			



## Appendix D Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form

### Supervisor's appraisal

*(Provide your comments to the self – appraisal given above. Indicate clearly where you agree or disagree with the assessment and your reasons. Provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)*

### **Standard 2: Instructional Practices**

*Demonstrating effective teaching practices.*

1. Uses a variety of instructional strategies and resources to encourage student engagement, critical thinking, and problem solving skills.

Unsatisfactory

Basic

Proficient

Distinguished

2. Uses a variety of grouping techniques to support learning.

Unsatisfactory

Basic

Proficient

Distinguished

3. Uses questioning and discussion techniques to deepen student understanding.

Unsatisfactory

Basic

Proficient

Distinguished

4. Identifies appropriate academic vocabulary and methods relevant to the subject and to learning targets and uses various strategies for student acquisition.

Unsatisfactory

Basic

Proficient

Distinguished

## Appendix D Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form

### Teacher's appraisal

*(Provide a brief explanation for your self - appraisal; provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)*

1. Students have opportunities to work in groups, partners, individually to problem solve. Often provide the resources needed, they are usually encouraged to use more than one resource.
2. 'Turn and talk' partners/reading partners paired by communication level and reading level. Writing process paired sing writing level. Unit of Inquiry grouping is usually mixed ability. Would like to get better at math grouping and pairing.
3. Reading response, Unit of Inquiry question charts, popcorn discussions on the carpet, 'turn and talk' partners.
4. Would like to find a way to become better at monitoring the use of this vocabulary and whether they have internalized it.

### Supervisor's appraisal

*(Provide your comments to the self – appraisal given above. Indicate clearly where you agree or disagree with the assessment and your reasons. Provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)*

### **Standard 3: Differentiation**

*Recognizing individual student learning needs, while developing and adapting teaching strategies to address the needs of all pupils.*

1. Uses observations and data to plan and provide interventions to support student learning.

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
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2. Establishes and monitors the achievement of appropriate growth goals to support EAL students and students not reaching full potential.

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
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## Appendix D Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form

### Teacher's appraisal

*(Provide a brief explanation for your self - appraisal; provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)*

### Supervisor's appraisal

*(Provide your comments to the self – appraisal given above. Indicate clearly where you agree or disagree with the assessment and your reasons. Provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)*

*This Standard on-hold until school provides PD in this area.*

### **Standard 4: Subject Matter & Curriculum**

*Providing a clear and intentional focus on subject matter and curriculum.*

1. Demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the subject taught.

Unsatisfactory

Basic >>>>>

Proficient

Distinguished

2. Employs research and inquiry methodologies pertinent to the discipline.

Unsatisfactory

Basic

Proficient

Distinguished

## Appendix D Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form

3. Implements meaningful interdisciplinary instruction and supports the development of trans - disciplinary skills (thinking, social, communication, self management, and research).			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
4. Incorporates diverse social and cultural perspectives in teaching and learning.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p><u>Teacher's appraisal</u></p> <p><i>(Provide a brief explanation for your self - appraisal; provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)</i></p> <p>I would like to become more experienced with using PYP language and the Learning Process language so that it can be used seamlessly by me and the students. I would like to get better at making the inquiry process more visible and meaningful for the students so that they can understand what stage they are in and know what they can or should be doing in that stage.</p>			
<p><u>Supervisor's appraisal</u></p> <p><i>(Provide your comments to the self – appraisal given above. Indicate clearly where you agree or disagree with the assessment and your reasons. Provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)</i></p>			

### Standard 5: Learning Environment

*Fosters and manages a learning environment that encourages active engagement in learning, positive social interaction and self-motivation.*

1. Builds positive, respectful relationships with students by understanding their backgrounds and interests.

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
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2. Values and respects the engagement and contributions of all students.

## Appendix D Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
3. Organizes a safe physical layout of the classroom to focus on learning.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
4. Effectively manages student behavior and classroom procedures.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<u>Teacher's appraisal</u>  <i>(Provide a brief explanation for your self - appraisal; provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)</i>  I would like for my classroom library to be more organized. I would like to make it more accessible for the class. I would also like to make the class supplies more organized and accessible so that the class can independently and efficiently do their activities. Perhaps somehow find an organized place for them to keep their supplies so that they are not in the way when they move to different tables for grouping.			
<u>Supervisor's appraisal</u>  <i>(Provide your comments to the self – appraisal given above. Indicate clearly where you agree or disagree with the assessment and your reasons. Provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)</i>			

### Standard 6: Student Assessment

*Uses multiple student data to modify instruction and improve student learning, makes accurate and productive use of assessment*

1. Designs instruction aligned to assessment.

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
2. Uses multiple data elements (pre-assessment, formative and summative assessments) to plan and modify instruction and assessment.			

## Appendix D Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form

Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
3. Provides opportunities for students to self-reflect, track progress toward learning goals.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
4. Establishes student growth goals and measures achievement of growth goals through observation and assessment, achievement of student growth goals.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<u>Teacher's appraisal</u>  <i>(Provide a brief explanation for your self - appraisal; provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)</i>  I need to make the assessments differentiated. I feel they are differentiated in spelling, some reading, maybe writing, but need to be adapted in math and unit of inquiry assessments (although the U of I assessments allow for a variety of responses). The class is doing pre and post assessments and analyzing their growth for those skills. I also need to get their assessment data together in an organized system so that I can track it better.			
<u>Supervisor's appraisal</u>  <i>(Provide your comments to the self – appraisal given above. Indicate clearly where you agree or disagree with the assessment and your reasons. Provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)</i>			

### Standard 7: Effective Communication

*Communicates and collaborates with parents/guardians and the school community*

1. Promotes positive interactions with students and parents / guardians regarding programs, courses and school events.

Unsatisfactory	Basic >>>>	Proficient	Distinguished
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## Appendix D Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form

2. Communicates individual student progress to parents/guardians in a timely and professional manner.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
3. Models effective verbal, written and other media communication techniques with students and families to foster active inquiry, collaboration and supportive interaction.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic >>>>	Proficient	Distinguished
4. Models effective use of technology and media communication tools to enhance learning, adheres to School's's Acceptable Use Policy.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
<p><u>Teacher's appraisal</u></p> <p><i>(Provide a brief explanation for your self - appraisal; provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)</i></p> <p>I would like to get the class blog or Edmodo up and running where announcements updates and photos can be posted along with student work. Need to start a routine with emailing newsletters or having it on the blog. I often email parents individually but would like to have more consistent communication with parents as a whole.</p>			
<p><u>Supervisor's appraisal</u></p> <p><i>(Provide your comments to the self – appraisal given above. Indicate clearly where you agree or disagree with the assessment and your reasons. Provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)</i></p>			

### Standard 8: Professionalism

*Exhibits collaborative and collegial practices focused on improving instructional practice and student learning, fulfills wider professional responsibilities*

1. Collaborates with colleagues to enhance teaching and learning.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished

## Appendix D Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form

2. Pursues professional development based on written growth and development plan, professional reflection, and monitors progress.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
3. Displays dependability by adhering to professional responsibilities and through active participation in school community.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished
4. Models the skills and attitudes of the Student and Teacher Profile, supports School's Guiding Principles.			
Unsatisfactory	Basic	Proficient	Distinguished

Teacher's appraisal

*(Provide a brief explanation for your self - appraisal; provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)*

It has been very helpful with my grade level partner and having the PYP planning time. I would love to sit in on other teachers' rooms sometime to see how they are implementing the learning cycle and inquiry cycle. I would like to get better at becoming ore organized with turning in attendance on time and managing my instructional planning/assessment checking time.

Supervisor's appraisal

*(Provide your comments to the self – appraisal given above. Indicate clearly where you agree or disagree with the assessment and your reasons. Provide examples, documentation, evidence where appropriate.)*



## Educator Growth Plan

Professional Growth Plan: Rachel

### OPPORTUNITIES

*Based on your self – assessment, identify the Standard and / or Indicators where you believe improvement is most required to drive your overall performance next year.  
(Please provide the Standard name / number and Indicator number.)*

- Standard 6 – Student Assessment
- Standard 2 Instructional Practices

### FOCUS

*Set your annual performance objectives. You should set no more than 3 performance objectives for the year. These become the priority - the FOCUS - for your growth plan.*

- To make the learning process piece of visible learning an every day practice in the class with an emphasis on student self-assessment.
- To improve on delivering inquiry bases lessons that vary in design.

### GOALS

*Set out your professional development goals. These should support the annual performance objectives identified in FOCUS. Include these essential qualities: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely. What will be the result indicators?  
(e.g. " To accomplish the identified professional growth target I will implement differentiated instructional strategies as measured by...)*

- I will create a way for students to assess their current stage in the learning process, create an organized place for them to assess and reflect on their learning.
- I will study different types of inquiry units and lessons in order to care more variety of experiences for the class.

### STRATEGIES

*Set out the specific strategy(ies) which you will use to achieve your performance objectives and professional development goals. This should include the action steps and timeline. Describe how you will monitor and assess your strategies.*

- Create a place/visual in the room for students to refer to in the learning process, assess class on their current opinion of what a good learner is and then create a way for them to track, reflect and record their learning.
- I would like to compile various inquiry activities and lesson and figure out what types of activities are best for different learning styles.
- Use of assessment Binder & observations of other teachers.

## Appendix D Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form

### RESULTS

*Have you achieved your performance objectives? Have you achieved your professional development goals? Were your strategies effective? Use data or other evidence to support your assessment.*

### REFLECTION

*How will the positive results be sustained? How might you share your learning with others?*

Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Feedback:

#### Standard 1: Student Learning & Achievement

At Rachel's request, Sandra to contact grade 3 to set-up a meeting time for joint discussion with Rachel re:

1. Strategies used in grade 3 for vocabulary acquisition & assessment of vocabulary development
2. ICT strategies and routines introduced in grade 3, Rachel keen to build on these
3. The 'Pit' and what to do when stuck – Sandra to pass additional resource to Rachel also.

#### Standard 4: Subject matter and curriculum

Using the language of the PYP & the Learning Process:

Suggestions:

- In daily planner – to make a note/reminder to incorporate a specific profile or attitude
- Within literature (read-aloud or class novel), can point out when a character(s) display any of the attitudes or profile
- Linking learning intentions to the profile or attitudes
- Sandra and Michael to team-teach lesson(s) with Rachel incorporating a focus on the profile and/or attitudes. Sandra and Michael to contact Rachel to plan for this in the New Year.

## **Appendix D Rachel's Performance Dialogue Form**

### **Standard 5: Learning Environment**

#### **Suggestion:**

- Sandra to provide release time so Rachel can observe routines re. management of supplies etc. in other classrooms.
- Rachel to begin to compile a list of any additional resources which might help with better movement of students from group to group in relation to supply management.

### **Standard 6: Student assessment**

- The class profile sheet Michael has put together for units of inquiry may help with tracking student achievement in terms of units of inquiry & might be worth trailing for 2 units to see how it works
- At the whole ES level, the reintroduction of the Assessment calendar when we review the Assessment Policy in the New year, should help with your goal of getting an organized system in place to help track student achievement & progress. This is something we also need to look at in terms of an ES wide dashboard of success

### **Standard 7: Student assessment**

- This is a great goal re. parent communication. We have a website set-up for each grade linked to the School's website but have fallen very far behind with getting them up and running. Pat and Nate can talk you through the set-up if you'd like to make a head-start re. this initiative.

### **Standard 9: Professionalism**

- Will make a note to arrange for you to observe in other classrooms in the New Year in relation to wanting to see the learning & inquiry cycle in operation by other teachers.

### **Annual Goals**

- PYP Coordinator and I will try to provide you with additional resources re. inquiry based lessons in the New Year. We have a couple of good books here at School.

## Appendix E

### Analysis

#### Research Questions:

How can teachers and principals within IB PYP schools become more actively involved in an appraisal system to support ongoing teacher development and systematic learning?

How might appraisal be effectively operationalized as a professional development tool to support ongoing teacher development in the implementation of the Standards and practices of the IB PYP?

**Table A3 Analysis**

**Rachel**

#### First level of analysis

Research focus – To identify	Initial topics/issues	Interim topics/issues	Final topics/issues
Opportunities to support teacher's continual learning and development	Learning Intentions, co-construction of rubrics, system for keeping track of student goals, beliefs about student goals, beliefs about usefulness of previous CPD related to goals, observe others practice, challenge with managing development and assessment of student vocabulary, articulates vocabulary practices, desire to enhance classroom organization to enhance learning, differentiation in math challenging, appraisal tool results in procedural change in practice, articulates PD request linked to others' practice	Inclusion in focus group to research of e-platform for student data, further development of understanding of purpose of appraisal, provide CPD in-house related to goals	<p>Opportunities for specifically targeted professional learning and development</p> <p>The appraisal process contributes to the development of a learning culture within the school</p> <p>The appraisal process activates individual initiative</p> <p>Teacher Mindset and Reflective practice</p>
Opportunities to support teacher's development related to standards and	Identifies areas for support: Learner Profile, Key Concepts, Transdisciplinary Skills,	Inquiry approach visible, extend/challenge teacher's	The provision of Instructional Leadership related to

## Appendix E Analysis

practices of the IB PYP	Language for Learning, Inquiry Cycle	concept of inquiry, model use of key concepts, Learner Profile, Inquiry cycle, Transdisciplinary skills	<p>teachers' specific needs</p> <p>The need to consolidate and sustain use of key IB PYP terminology</p> <p>The need to continually refine, expand and reflect on PYP practice</p>
Opportunities for linkage to 'system' based continuing professional learning & development	Interest in e-platform for school-based student data, anchor charts, share own inquiry into vocabulary, Evernote, request to observe others' practice	<p>Collaborating with colleague re. vocabulary &amp; ICT, self-initiated additional vocabulary strategy, opportunity to share expertise in literacy with colleagues</p> <p>Working with principal on e-platform, Initiated communication with friend re. use of Evernote</p> <p>Prior experience of data system emerges</p> <p>Growth mindset, enthusiastic</p>	<p>Opportunities to link peers to provide specific continuing professional development</p> <p>Identification of teachers who can contribute to capacity building at the school level</p> <p>Increased leader knowledge of how the system is operating and how it might be improved</p>

## Appendix E Analysis

**Rachel**

### Second level of analysis

Opportunities to support teacher's development	<p>Articulates area for follow-up during observation; opportunity to identify/confirm potential support needed, Joint refinement of understanding of current practice, specific challenges and CPD needs &amp; interests</p> <p>Leader shares own learning journey</p> <p>Articulates on-going interest in addressing management and tracking of student data, Identifies belief system about student goal-setting</p> <p>Growth-mindset &amp; openness to trying suggestions</p>
Opportunities to support teacher's development related to the the standards and practices of the IB PYP	<p>Articulates current implementation level, specific needs and challenges related to PYP: Key concepts, IB Learner Profile, Transdisciplinary skills, use of inquiry cycle</p> <p>Opportunity to reaffirm growth already achieved and challenge/extend teacher's understanding of the implementation of IB PYP</p> <p>Opportunity presents for principal and PYP coordinator to model lesson/team teach with Rachel</p> <p>Rachel identifies PD opportunity she'd like (observe implementation of IB PYP in another classroom)</p>
Opportunities for links to 'system' learning (To support or become involved in others' CPL/CPD)	<p>Opportunity to involve Rachel in school-wide initiative based on self-reported interest in student data management system</p> <p>Share current practice as an inquiry into vocabulary development, tracking and assessment</p> <p>Provides feedback on effectiveness of meetings where practice has been shared - confirms effective strategy for continued use</p> <p>Growth-mindset &amp; willingness, interest to getting involved on a school-wide basis</p> <p>Extends leaders' knowledge of challenges and degrees of implementation of practice</p> <p>Opportunity exists for Rachel to support another teacher's practice (Use of Anchor Charts for Literacy)</p> <p>Opportunity for another teacher to support Rachael's practice (ICT &amp; vocabulary)</p>

## Appendix E Analysis

### Rachel Emerging Themes

Research focus – To identify	Themes - Appraisal process provides opportunities to:
Opportunities for active involvement to support teacher's continual learning and development	<p>Target specific areas for professional learning and development (based on emerged shared understanding of teachers' perceived current practice, challenges, future development needs)</p> <p>Process encouraged independent initiative</p> <p>Contributes to a learning culture (&amp; relationship building)</p>
Opportunities to support teacher's development in the standards and practices of the IB PYP	<p>Specifically target support related to implementation of key elements of the IB PYP (Provide Instructional Leadership tied to specific teacher needs)</p> <p>Reaffirm growth and extend teachers' understanding of key elements of the IB PYP</p> <p>Teacher clearly articulates own desired learning needs</p>
Opportunities for 'system' based continuing professional learning & development	<p>Identify teacher who can contribute to capacity building</p> <p>Link peers to target specific CPD</p> <p>Contribute to leader's knowledge of how the system is operating</p> <p>Teacher clearly articulates own desired learning needs</p>

## Appendix E Analysis

### Emerging Themes from data

Opportunities to support professional learning at the individual teacher level	Opportunities to support implementation of the IB PYP	Opportunities to support capacity building at the school level
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for specifically targeted professional learning and development</li> <li>• The appraisal process contributes to the development of a learning culture within the school</li> <li>• The appraisal process activates individual initiative</li> <li>• Teacher Mindset and Reflective practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of Instructional Leadership related to teachers' specific needs</li> <li>• The need to consolidate and sustain use of key IB PYP terminology</li> <li>• The need to continually refine, expand and reflect on PYP practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities to link peers to provide specific continuing professional development</li> <li>• Identification of teachers who can contribute to capacity building at the school level</li> <li>• Increased leader knowledge of how the system is operating and how it might be improved</li> </ul>



## **Appendix F**

### **Initial Appraisal interview with Rachel**

S. So where are we at we're looking at where you think you are in relation to this, let's go through it. (S. reading) (Self-assessment and achievement. I need to start posting the learning achievements in the room in order for the class to have an explicit idea of what they are learning - they usually have a good idea of what they are working on, usually verbalizes it, they do cycles for subjects should they (not sure) rights I have not used any teacher student generated rubrics I need to start doing that however)

S. But you are using - Oh, you mean collaborating

R. Like the one we make together

S. OK - (S. reading - - However, they have used math and (not clear) that aren't teacher generate, after unit they- Explain this one to me 'that aren't teacher generated' so they...

R. So the math and writing are the ones the math is from the book and the 6 traits is from the formal

S. Ok, so they're published ones - (reading check wording) -- after this they revisit assignments, I'd like to come up with a goal system for this.) Laugh talk over each other

S. Ok, so we'll check through this (R. that was quick because I had know idea that we were going to be coming up with the goals -you know for the morning conferences)

S. So where do so, would you be able to say what's going on in the elementary meetings or with the with visible learning is helping with this

R. Yeah, oh yeah for sure and the sharing of the goals for the ideal goals has helped a lot and um I still think it is definitely something I am still working on because just trying to organize it- you know I just feel like I don't want them drowning in goals because, like we have our math goal, our subject based goals and then we have the three smart goals, so just trying to figure out a way to keep those relevant and purposeful and you know have the kids be able to track and reflect on it you know yeah just like having it in kind of a organized way where they can do it themselves and it's not something has to be like the teacher says revisit your goals look at your goals something that they are actually you (S. Doing themselves?) know doing on their own

S. The one I saw that was really effective was Salinas in grade one, that's just star like putting them on a star you could put it on a piece of Styrofoam or something that is on their desk all the time they put the stickers on it it's there it's

20:05

S. I saw a tiny little one that Heather did that was actually a behavioral piece

R. Oh is it the pyramid one, John gave me the pyramid and they write their goals on each face of the pyramid and they have that on their desks right now and I like that having them visible thing, but I think just trying to figure out a day or a time where they can read this, you know like I don't know I have to figure that out somehow

S. You know, maybe go visit, I'm going to do it myself, observe in Mark and Ellen's room because they've given them 15 minutes in the evening, or 15 minutes in the morning to actually work on the goals. They've built a time in (R. Say something) every day. No, they do it every day so it's literally when they arrive in the morning that that's what they do. (R.Oh that's good) isn't it (R. That's good) I'm sure there are lots of other ways, maybe before you even start something go and visit their room, I'm happy to stand in yours, I'm going myself because I never managed it as a grade teacher (laugh)

R. I know, I know

S. Yeah, but I liked that star piece or (R. Yeah) so visual like how it was there, so try

## Appendix F Initial Appraisal interview with Rachel

something like that and see. So you're going, we can feed back on this on this one then in midterm. Yeah, that would be really nice

S. And then instructional practices - students have an opportunity to work in /with partners, individual and problem solve, resources needed, turn and talk partners, ... (21:39) by communication, writing partners UOI, reading responses, What are we on now - questioning and Brilliant - would like to find a way to become better at managing the use of this vocabulary and rather they have internalized that - I can send you straight to Jeff Lewis. Amazing - he introduced a book here I'm not even sure I'm going to do this justice to it, but It was literally a triangle and he said - the theory behind it is the top end of the triangle is unit specific vocabulary, the bottom end is your everyday vocabulary you know the like the adjectives, the verbs and thing in here is where you can develop a rich vocabulary because it's about synonyms and things like wonderful and stupendous and all that and he does it

that way and he has a way of working with them. I'm not sure it's going to answer like the assessment of it, but he's a lovely ways to manage vocabulary.

(R. agreeing through out with yeah,

R. Because right now the - I think it's the Fryer Method with the square and the word in the middle and they do that four of their unknown words from the word work sort (?) so I started doing that because that's one of their daily or one day a week they do that, and then and I mean, that's as far as it goes for vocabulary and they keep a post it when their reading a chapter book and write all the unknown words they couldn't figure out and talk about it with their reading partners or look it up in a dictionary, and we've talked about ways to expand vocabulary and ah I don't know I feel like the word work happens so fast that sometimes and like seeing how there assessing, how they're vocabulary is growing

S. And maybe more strategies, not strategies I mean you've got lots of them in terms of how to do it, but they are applying it, like more applications strategies and what did we say - assessment of vocabulary. Ok, sounds great. Really clear, thank you. )

24:06

S. What are we on - differentiation is a huge one

R. Oh yeah, you told me you were going to leave that one

S. We'll just need to get PD in here and Rick Wormell may or may not we are looking at it k-12 to see if that might - what's going to go. (Reading) I'd like to become more experienced with using PYP language and the learning language process so that I can be used seamlessly by me and the students of PYP and the learning process better, at making the learning process more visible, OK, so I would like to better use the inquiry process more visible meaning for the students so that they can understand what they're - but that just sounds like it's time. Like it's really clear what you want to do, using the language learning process and what stage they're doing, because even putting up they inquiry cycle

R. I think this was before we came up with (?) 25:10 learning, so that definitely helps because now that we have the official language I think now, now the part with the theme/stage? and using that language like I'm turning in and I'm researching (S. And you could even do it as a class first before they ever got to an individual level) (R. Right)

S. By literally putting a post it or something, or a star on it - today we are at this stage, and that's how we learn - I think just a little bit of that. This seems like this is just practice over 6 months, to the end of the year an keeping it to the forefront that as you go through and you're working with language arts or whatever you have a focus like, oh I'm going to do like I don't know in your lesson script today when I'm planning this I'm going to (R. Integrate) (S. Yeah or reinforce it - today we're using communication skills or we are practicing communication skills or even like reading a book looking at the you know how you put characterization with the profile. I think it's more like, it's not a case of how to do it tweaking doing it.

## Appendix F Initial Appraisal interview with Rachel

R. Yeah, because I walk by someone's room and hear them use one of the learner profiles and I'm like oh my god that's a great way to tell them they should be focused right now using thing like -did you come in right, the. (26:48). learner does this. I want to get to that point where it just kind of like I don't even think about it. LAUGH but it just comes out, but I guess

(S. To get to that point is deliberate practice, isn't it? I used to literally put stars on it (lesson plan book) and then tweak it and see Oh I'm going to try this, I'm going to do that and then it became more automatic)

R. Or even when I get better (laugh) at writing my learning intentions on the board (laugh) and my success criteria maybe having it visible for them to practicing

(S. Brilliant, oh that's fantastic, I've never thought of it in those terms, I'm going to share this with Michael)

R. They did have one of their goal is a skill goal and their portfolio separated into the skills sections, and so lately I'm kinda finding out that kind of the only time we talk about the skills, you know isolated you know, like oh well you know what activity would go into the thinking skills, you know. I have a list of all what the skills is so that is helpful, but yeah, it's not embedded like every day the language is just happening.

S. Give yourself a chance you know you 're only starting at that that's a big learning curve. What, the current unit is only starting isn't it, (R. ahuh) so we could look at the planner as see what the skills are and the profile is and then Michael and I could come in and do one that we could all do together.

R. OK, we could do a three way kind of focus on.

S. Your girls were great the other day. (R. Oh good, they really loved both days they loved seeing St. Raphaela we talked about it yesterday because in reading I'm doing like kind of my focus for this RRR in reading we are doing social issues so looking at social issues and looking at that to embed all the comprehension skills and everything so it kinda worked out perfect with the RRR because now they're seeing social issues like divorce, homelessness, and also relating it to the RRR (S. So the key was like social issues) So they have been mentioning St. Raphaela a bunch when we are talking about social issues that we find in our books and we read a book that Ingrid gave me, Yes ? And something and they were comparing the girls experience in Bangladesh with the St. Raphaela kids, they were saying, Oh, St. Raphaela kids don't have a lot of light in their house either and their electricity, so they just loved it

(S. Wow)

R. They love when you come and teach them and they love the other activities. Today we did an activity and I asked do you remember the concepts for this unit and like half of them remembered the concepts and for me that usually takes the whole unit, like it's the end of the unit and they're like what were the concepts, but it was like it just stuck. Like having that paper, the magnifying glass and the lesson you did with them like it really (S. Well, they got the (prime right?) version because Michael is much more sophisticated) It was good enough. LAUGH With them being able to mention it.

S. Learning environment where are we on now - I'd like for my classroom library to be more organized, more accessible, I'd like to make the class - perhaps find some ordinary ... supplies so they're not in the way. OK, go and have a look - that's more about you having a look about it and coming to me a list of suggestions, (R. Right) because this is not my forte, there are much better teachers on staff that really know about classroom design and things like that.

R. Yeah, so it's been a work in progress, so I think like those tables, I forgot to send those pictures. Yeah, I mean I think it's gotten a lot better than at the beginning of the year when I wrote this - I was like kind of moving my room around like every other week, like how do I want it, I think it's nice now. Well, I like it. I love the carpet, it's just kind of like, it has like a pop of color, it's bizarre this area, I like having areas, so I'm kinda like OCD about it.

## Appendix F Initial Appraisal interview with Rachel

S. Like if you've got a really vibrant learning environment that's great and you know the space. Make a list of what you'd like and what you think we need for that room if there are other things.

R. I can't really think of anything, Oh, now I know what I was thinking of - now that it's winter time and they're putting their coats on their chairs it's getting really tight in there so maybe if we could use that coat rack in the hallway is that ok?

S. Absolutely, and if not I'll go upstairs and look we used to keep one in the learning lab last year. I'll go and look for it.

R. There's one in the hallway that Harry said they weren't going to be using because he's using the hooks on the wall.

S. Oh, so yeah, we might have to move some of those books and things has he got something on it at that time.

R. Yes, it's some of our books

S. Ok, we'll move it

32:42

S. reading - I need to make the assessments different I feel they're different in spelling and some reading group need to .. the math and the UOI. The way the class sustain pre and post assessments and analyzing their growth skills. OK you have done this already. They are assessing data together and organize a system that tracks it better. Actually, this something is going to be ES focus. We used to have an assessment binder and folders and we need to revisit our assessment calendar, so this is something we'll be doing.

R. I used to have data binders in my class because the states they're very like about their data binders, so each kid has a data binder and they know like they put all their assessments there. So I guess it would be kind of like a goal binder almost, you know they're setting their goals, Goals go in there - as well like all of your running records for them go in there so it's all stuff you have for them and test they've taken and their reflections of the units it's almost like the portfolio but it's more not a place for them to show work it's a place for them to have like their assessments. (S. Wow) But I just haven't gotten that

(S. That sounds like a great thing, because I'm just coming out of the IB meeting we know that we want to make those developmental continuum of reading and writing a lot more solid so we can get them on the walls, the kids chart their way up and then if they had them in something like this (R. Yeah, yeah) it would be fantastic. OK that's got to be ah ha elementary work, never mind yours. (Laugh) OK and I'll ask PYP Coordinator about this - I don't know because I've never tried it. Differentiated assessment in UOI

R. I think that the summative is so far the one we did for the human body that was they're so wide open that I think that is kind of differentiated because they're kinda like here are the directions, but you put all of your learning on it like how you want it, so I thought that one, even though it was the same assessment it catered to all (S. Oh cool) But yeah, I just have a hard time with I'm like math doing you know

S. It's not you it's the math here because we need to get the whole everyday math thing the first and see where we are going with it. The first piece I think is Mark and PYP Coordinator finishing that scope and sequence and then from there. Actually, I met with Mark this morning and we were talking about like looking at an online resource. I think it's time we put some serious money into it and he recommended the Math Investigations buying that for each grade and then teachers being made - you know one resource

R. is that.. (can't catch phrase) 35:50

S. No, it's

R. Oh, that's Harcourt I don't know who made it. It's in the professional library. What about S. That's one online resource; yeah, We have the free one and Michael's worked with it. The purchased one, so yeah, that was one. OK, you're really pulling out ES as well as your own (laugh) So do you mind me scribbling

## Appendix F Initial Appraisal interview with Rachel

R. Not at all, so the kids do have a source online resource right now they can go online 36:27

S. No, not at all they have a free Mathletics one I'll look at Pat and she uses a certain times that I'll ask her about, it's only it's quite limited into one or two strands of math it might be limited in just one strand of math and then I'll see where it's going.

S. Communication all class Edmodo up and running, Brilliant, great goal another ES whole thing

S. (reading) You're talking about communication with parents (R. Oh Yeah) it's exactly working with grade level's partner, oh isn't that so nice. General learnings - I'd love to seat in with another teachers' interns (?) Oh this is an easy one to do (reading) How they are planning their learning circle and inquiry circle, (S. this is really easy) get more in turning in attendance (laugh) that's Chizu and managing my instructional planning and assessment check in time (Yep) wouldn't we all love that one (laugh) My desk wouldn't look like this

R. Oh, you know I have an attendance checker since I did this and I have them go on the Veracross web site they know how and then they click, I've only gotten one email from Chizu in the last week maybe or maybe two. That say - Oh your attendance isn't in. Which is a lot better than getting it every day that your attendance isn't in.

S. That's great

R. Yeah, I was like, you know what I'm just going to get them to go online and do it, you know they'll remember.

S. And they're learning skills along the way and that's Brilliant

R. That's a little better, but still not

S. That's real easy for me to do get you in observing and more than happy to come in and cover

R. And I'd like for Jana because this was before visible learning and before we had completed both of them, but I liked what Jeff and Jana did for their impact cycle of the learning process like you know like get their kids talking about their learning process, (S. Oh, Yeah) I thought that was nice the pit and all and all that and then also the technology piece I feel like Jeff does so many really great things with them with technology and online and even my kids know a lot from him last year so even I had them going on Google classroom and like you know because every once in awhile I'll have them do an assignment on Google classroom because I kind of don't want them to forget everything they learned in Jeff's room, but I feel like oh no they have all of these skills and I just want to be able to like reinforce it like keep it going so I'm hoping to get it better at that this year like making it more every day thing for them to get online.

S. Why don't you, you could make a list of question or recommendations, or the things that you are noticing you want the kids to pick up on. We can get you in to watch when he's doing it or he could even stage it a lesson to show how he manages it. Are these two teachers that you'd like to work observe most they are brilliant?

R. I think I don't know if anybody else got the technology piece, but Jeff was definitely my kids know a lot and I know he was in that course that a couple of other teachers were in. So yeah the technology piece and then for the learning process and inquiry cycle I don't know that's up to you, I'd ask you for a recommendation I don't know.

S. Sure, so we can do some focus lessons in there in the classroom and then we'd look for a teacher to watch and definitely Jana and Jeff, you've recognized two, (Brilliant)

S. So come up with questions or things that you want to ask them and bring it to me and then I'll get you to meet with them at a time they're free, first

R. I think that we do have a common planning period; I don't remember what day it is S. Ok, it's all on this one too (I'm going to have to type this up immediately, but I did Mark's because I can never read my own notes)

## Appendix F Initial Appraisal interview with Rachel

S. (reading) Away for students to assess their current learning, create an organizer,. Oh, we are going to do some of this in the ES meeting this week. (Reading)

Do differentiation types of inquiry in order to create more varieties and experiences for the class. Let's see if we can get you some resources in that one. (Mumble) 41:36

S. Do you know that red book Different class Inquiry classroom or something? I'll look for it.

S. (Reading) Create a place for students to refer to the learning process the same one assess class on their current opinion of what a learner is and then create a (this is great) Ok assessment binders, Observation of other teach brilliant Ok Yeah

S. How was the process of doing this?

R. This! Oh super helpful yeah defiantly it was good to kind of anchor and have an idea of where I want to grow and I think at the beginning you know it's so much new stuff it's like I want to this , I want to do this, I've got to do this, I've got to do this and this was a good way for me to organize and kind of like consult and not just pencil in important exactly where I want to improve and exactly what I want to do.

S. I'm going to type this up and I'm going to send it back give it back to you and then I'll write some notes at the bottom and then I'll start to put to put those piece in place for you.

R. And let me know - this is the first time I'm doing this kind, so let me know if I need to fix or change or any thing.

S. No it's wonderful, how long did it take you to do it

R. I think maybe 40 minutes - S. So

R. I think I did it like one 20-minute session and then another 20 minute session, but it was good and I think now that 'am familiar with these areas this is what took most of the time reading through this and seeing what meant what, but now that I more familiar with that is would be much faster

S. And the evidence piece is nice, it's easy, it's so wide, so I'll feedback – thank you so much.

## Appendix G

### Classroom observation notes - Rachel’s Room

...Turn and talk partner...(providing directions to students as I entered the room)  
Asked students to welcome Ms. Sandra

(Mini-lesson on the carpet)

Rachel: Readers, we’ve been focusing on biographies, what they look like how they’re formatted, what features we’ve encounter  
All the strategies, you can use as a reader when reading a biography.  
(links to prior lesson/prior learning)

10:25 I want to tell you a story....I have dinner with a friend once a week, we talk about books we’re reading, movies and shows we’ve watched. We have very difference opinions so that makes for very good and interesting discussions. One character I don’t agree with her opinion about his Steve Jobs, we’ve both been reading his biography. I keep coming back to it, can’t finish it, it’s intriguing. We’ve had this discussion about Steve Jobs, she thought everything he did was right, perfect, that he was a risk-taker. That’s her opinion. I thought at times he was kind of reckless, disrespectful. She said what do you mean, I don’t remember that part. If we had the book with us, we could have looked for the part, looked for the evidence. Our opinions weren’t the same and that made the discussion exciting. We’re always asking....What about this, what about that...they’re really fun, discussions. I tell you that story because today, you’re going to be having a discussion with your learning partner about your biography (shares objective of session with students)

Central Idea: Readers form opinions about people in biographies based on evidence from the text so they can discuss their opinions with others.

(Models strategy, expectation/thinks aloud) Let’s look at this book, the boy who invented TV, I picked out a part of the books where I started to form opinions.

When I read that I started to form the opinions that he’s dedicated to...  
Interested in...Grows his knowledge...

Use of graphic organizer on the easel:

My opinion is...I think	Evidence from the text
Philo is dedicated to growing his knowledge about science	He spends his money on it He wakes up early so he can read for an hour

Sit down (student name), you’re already been once, bring a tissue back with you.  
(classroom management)

I started to form an opinion, then, I showed you the evidence from the book.

Reads from book; When Maria Sang (Story of Maria Callas)

Based on what I’m reading about Maria, what opinions are you having about Maria?

## Appendix G Classroom observation notes – Rachel's Room

Turn and talk to your partner, using...  
My opinion is...

Rachel circulates to support students. (2 students with low achievement scores in literacy)

I spoke two students about their learning– confidently shared opinion, Maria was an inquirer, curious about learning languages,

Second group of students – She cared for her family, in the book, she was sad to her mum.

(Rephrases instruction related to task) Today, when you're reading your biography, you're going to be thinking about, you opinions, what from the book is helping you think that way,

Some of you have your biographies, I'm going to spread some out on the floor and you can choose from here if you don't have one...you can choose one you've read before or a new one

Who just left the tissue on the floor? (classroom management)

Right girls, 5 more seconds, let's go...

Mini lesson and instruction lasts 16 minutes

Independent practice: All settle to read

Observation: Use of anchor chart reflects, build up of knowledge regarding the structure of biographies and gradual introduction of reading strategies in different colored pens over the period of the unit

Rachel circulates to work with individual students (3 students with lower reading attainment –one previously supported)

Student name – can you turn and read out loud so we can read it together. Has post-it in hand to take notes. Questions student: What is this about, is there one thing you can share about Ann (Frank)?

Why is she so important/good that people write biographies about her?

(Student: she survived the war....)

I know you know a lot about her but as you're reading are you paying attention to the new things you're learning about her?

Moves to another student

Questions Student: What thinks are you thinking about? What are you trying to form an opinion about as you read?

What incident in the book could you have an opinion about? Student answers...

What do you think about it? What's that telling you about?

(Reiterates Instructions to the class)

Let's pause there for a minute. Do you have any opinions right now?

I think that...

Why?

Do you have evidence from the text?

Student approaches – reminds of routine (class management)

When I'm reading with someone you need to solve the problem on your own



## **Appendix G Classroom observation notes – Rachel's Room**

Returns to individual student , provides scaffolding, questions

Reads pieces for the student. Models – He's pretty innovative, how can I say that? he designed it, he tested it out, that's how he got to build a steam boat. What kind of a person is he?

Student: Building. Rachel: What do you think his personality is like? His attitude is like? How would you describe him? He's an inventor, he tries a lot, did all of his designs work out?

What do we call someone who never gives up?

Dedicated

Keep reading, see if your thinking about him keeps developing.

Transition – learning partners share

We are going to stop, I hope you have opinions, find you partners, counts down 10, 9 to 1 slowly (classroom management), great pace.

Circulates as students share

Approaches 1 group, provides scaffold to the sharing: (includes student previously individually supported)

Can I stop you right now, I want you to discuss your opinions about the person, turn and face each other

Observation: all students actively engaged. Students are learning from each other, developing interest in reading other biographies from each other

Analysis (Seisen Performance Development Standards/Indicators observed)

### **Notes for Feedback to Rachel**

#### **Standard 1 Student Learning & Achievement**

Clear expectations regarding strategies for forming an opinion and the need to base it on evidence from text shared with students, clear expectations set regarding discussion format, solid classroom routines and management evident which allows this happen.

Centering instruction on high expectations of student achievement.

Link to own self-assessment on Seisen Performance Development Process:

Expressed a desire to co-construct rubrics, system for monitoring assessments and goals. How might you might achieve this, set-this up?

Suggestion to reach your own self-assessment goal:

- Explicitly learning objectives & success criteria, well shared verbally.
- Choose rubric in a central transdisciplinary skill area to co-construct., so it becomes an anchor you can revisit (i.e. discussion) (Already evident in lesson with Jeff).
- Become part of an ES discussion group re. choice of new on-line system for monitoring goal-setting and assessments.

#### **Standard 2 Instructional Practices**

Use of variety of instructional strategies and grouping techniques

Use of learning partners/turn and talk partners evident as a routine, together with whole class instruction & time for individual practice provided during observation. Use of questioning and discussion techniques evident. (proficient rating)

Link to own self-assessment on Seisen Performance Development Process:

Monitoring student vocabulary development

Suggestion to reach your own self-assessment goal:

Use of word wall, individual vocabulary notebooks, continue the ICT work you've

## **Appendix G Classroom observation notes – Rachel's Room**

begun with Jeff in vocabulary, inquire into vocabulary development and lead professional inquiry, sharing session

Standard 3 Differentiation (discussion focus)

- Uses observations and data to plan and provide interventions to support student learning. (observed)
- Establishes and monitors the achievement of appropriate growth goals to support EAL students and students not reaching full potential (emerging in observation)
- 

Standard 4 Use of inquiry based methodology (discussion focus)

- Revisit concept of inquiry & choose inquiry model

Standard 5 Learning Environment (all proficient rating (discussion)

How can you reach your own self-assessment goal? Classroom library (link to ordering) and organization of supplies (pintrest?)

Standard 6 (discussion) re. a system for recording, tracking assessment and linking the data to planning

Standard 7 Effective communication (discussion focus)

System focus (ES issue, ), ICT capacity building (making solid efforts & progress, PD attendance at, work with Jeff & independent effort Google Classroom/Edmodo)

Standard 8 Professionalism

### **Discussion Points for interim interview with Rachel**

- I noticed the post-it notes in you hand, how can you monitor/record student achievement to chart progress?
- I observed you actively supporting 3 students whom I know to struggle, how are planning for differentiation for students? How might you record that differentiation? (Standard 3)
- Can you identify opportunities to incorporate/use the PYP concepts (form, function), profile & attitudes within the lesson?
- How can you/how would you like to share your knowledge of literacy with colleagues? (moving towards a distinguished rating)
- Definition of inquiry – explore (approach evident)

Emerging suggested tentative goals for next year:

- Developing approach/system to engaging with vocabulary development & its assessment & monitoring
- Systems to record and monitor student assessments & progress towards goals (links to planning for differentiation also – system rather than strategies)
- Planning to incorporate use of PYP concepts, profile and attitudes into literacy & math lessons
- Continue development of use of ICT
- Professional sharing with colleagues (literacy (sharing of expertise) and/or vocabulary development – vocabulary, share your inquiry/questions, wonderings, learning journey)

Appendix H

Instructional Round Observations

Table A4 Rachel's lesson observation by Harry

Rachel	Students
<p>// I came a little late, class at carpet //</p> <p>talking about an experience at the ocean, waves, surfing, capturing the image</p> <p>modeling a pre-writing method, writing words and phrases that capture the image</p> <p>using an organizer to focus details for image, sound, feeling, light, questions, repeating words</p> <p>wrote details connected to sound on a sticky note</p> <p>"trying to use imagery"</p> <p>next: light "sunny, bright, blue skies, twinkle on water", speaking aloud as writing</p> <p>next: questions</p> <p>directs students to create the imagery room organizer in their notebooks</p> <p>setting task: label rooms, think about a topic from nature that you'll write about; discuss with a partner</p> <p>ends it with "eyes up here"</p> <p>advice about picking talking: not broad, specific, a moment</p> <p>use the organizer to help you, don't have to go in order or be restricted by it...</p> <p>"off you go"</p> <p>"go back to your lists if you don't know what to write about..."</p> <p>sits by a specific student</p> <p>walked along row behind students, flagged by one, answers a question</p>	<p>some students speak aloud question examples, not disruptive</p> <p>silently open notebooks at carpet, get started</p> <p>most students chat</p> <p>students settle into seats, few brief conversations</p>

## Appendix H Instructional Round Observations

<p>continued walking nearby, stops to question</p> <p>speaks to class as a whole about using pictures they have as inspiration</p> <p>stops at one with a blank organizer, reminder about previously taught strategies for finding a topic, getting started</p> <p>continues walking among, redirected off task student</p> <p>bell rang “back to the carpet, bring notebooks”</p> <p>invitation to share</p> <p>compliments use of similes, metaphors (previous lessons)</p> <p>summarizes: “just another way to help you plan for drafts, worked for some, don’t use it if you find it too restrictive...”</p>	<p>some seem hesitant to start, slow to start</p> <p>Saya returns to carpet area to read Rachel’s sample sticky notes</p> <p>most students filling in parts of organizer</p> <p>student returns to Rachel’s examples</p> <p>some share, finger clap</p>
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## Appendix H Instructional Round Observations

**Table A5 Harry's lesson observed by Rachel**

Learning Intentions		Success Criteria
<b>Ellen:</b> Reading like a Writer and Writing like a Reader. Stories have a purpose and structure that help to make the author’s intention clear		Understand how authors develop their ideas through 3 types of supporting details (action, dialogue, feelings)  Use a ‘clock’ organizer to annotate examples of how ideas were developed in <i>The White Giraffe</i> , by Lauren St. John
<b>Mark</b> Read as a Writer and Writer as a reader  Effective stories have a purpose and structure that help to make the author’s intention clear		Use my schema to fill in a graphic organizer and make predictions and inferences about <i>Esperanza Rising</i> by Pam Munoz Ryan Identify and annotate through examples how the themes and character may be developed in our shared text <i>Esperanza Rising</i> Use a graphic organizer to plan my writing
<b>Rachel:</b> Today we are going to be moving along in the writing process and collecting ideas, we will talk about and how we can get more ideas through drafting.		No success criteria explicitly provided
6 Room Image Poem		
<b>Image</b> Something you’re seen outside that is beautiful or amazing. Describe it...	<b>Light</b> Look at the same image as the first room and describe the quality of light, i.e. bright, color, etc.	
<b>Sound</b> Picture the same image and focus on the sounds	<b>Questions</b> Write any questions you have about the image. What are you wondering	
<b>Feelings</b> What feelings do you have about this image?	<b>Repeating Words</b> Look over the 5 rooms. Pick a word, phrase, or sentence that feels important and write it 3 times	
<b>Harry:</b> Begin to recognize and use figurative language to enhance writing, such as: metaphors, similes, idioms, alliteration Today we’ll focus on similes		Provides examples of similes and explains these are the success criteria against which today’s classwork will be measured

## Appendix H Instructional Round Observations

### Rachel's Lesson – Observer: Ellen

*Behaviour/ Readiness Reminder to get books, pencils, materials sorted*

"Today we are going to be moving along in the writing process and collecting ideas. Last week we started collecting ideas. We wrote lists of all the places we can find poetry, ideas we want to write about, places that you have been, people that mean something to you. You also went back to your heart map that you have been adding to all year."

T: Today we are going to talk about drafting and how we can get more ideas through drafting

T: We look at a blank sheet of paper, and think about how do we want the poem to look, how do we want it to start, what message do we want to share

*Ss 'turn and share' about why we use imagery.*

T: Today we are going to use our knowledge of imagery to help write poems. We are going to use imagery to help create our drafts. We have 6 rooms

T: I am going to write about one of the most amazing things I have ever seen, the surf competition in Hawaii. I am going to start with my **image**. T writing her ideas on a post-it and adding it to the **6 room writing organizer**. T describes the loud **sound** of waves. T using figurative language. T describes her **feelings, light**, and then asks about some **questions** that she has about the scene. "Why are the waves so big, are the surfers scared, why are they so brave?" **Repeating words**- are there any words from my poem that I'd like to repeat? Booming, thunderous waves.

T: I am going to use all of the rooms and the words from my organizer to write my poem. This imagery will help to write your own poem.

*Ss setting up organizers in notebook*

T: Turn and talk about what you are going to write about

*Ss turning and talking*

T: Go back to your desks and begin developing the imagery you will use in your poem.

### Appendix I

#### Teachers' Reflections on Instructional Rounds

##### Ellen's Reflection

1. What do you think you've learned through this process?
  - a. I've seen the value of observation and peer-evaluation/discussion of lessons
  - b. I've learned more about the purpose and value of instructional rounds
  - c. My attention has been refocused on direct instruction and this will be something I work on improving for the remainder of the year
2. How do you feel about this process?

Leading up to the observation, it was very intimidating to think about having my peers and principal come in and observe. This is due in part to the fact that we were all trying this for the first time and didn't know what to expect.

  - a. During the lesson, I was happy to have my peers there and felt that what they saw was an accurate representation of student learning and participation in my class.
3. How do you understand student learning through this process?
  - a. Seeing the different stages of a lesson in different contexts was really valuable. I observed how students really responded to modeling, guiding and eventual independent release. Seeing students within the same classes who struggled and soared at the same points in these different lessons reminded me of the importance of differentiation. I am wondering how I can better meet the needs of *all* learners in my class.
4. What challenges did you encounter?
  - a. It was hard to work my literacy lesson into the time constraints of 40 minutes. I need to focus my energy on planning more *focused* mini-lessons and explicitly moving kids through chunked material and the stages of a lesson.
5. How 'usual' to your normal practice was the lesson observed?
  - a. Usual: The level of participation by students was normal, prepared materials, collaborative planning of lesson(s) with other teacher, use of a graphic organizer/model text.
  - b. Unusual: the amount of time I spent at the front of the room talking.
6. What difference does **sticking** to evidence make to your conversations about student learning?
  - a. Accountability. If no one is seeing it, then maybe it's not as common or evident as you might think.
7. In the light of the data, what would be reasonable for you/for us to do to support our professional learning in support of student learning?
  - a. I think that having people engage in the process as we did was valuable. It's good to come to the place we did naturally, without being given too much guidance on specific parameters. Got everyone thinking deeply about the purpose on their own and then collectively debriefing. I think that after this debrief, we should be given a way to codify the results (based on a common structure of what a good lesson should have), quickly use it to analyze our practice, set a goal to improve and then do it again by having the whole group work together again or just pairs, perhaps.
8. How will we know if educators do anything with this learning?
  - a. Follow-up with a second round of observations
  - b. Set goals and measure progress with peer observation and meet to discuss "how is it going" as a group.

## **Appendix I Teachers' Reflections on Instructional Rounds**

- c. Collect student voice
- 9. Are there any suggestions you would make about the future use of Instructional Rounds?
  - a. I think it is important to be working with a group of people that you trust. I felt very comfortable when I was personally evaluating how I was doing and setting some goals for myself after seeing practice in other classes.
  - b. I think it was really valuable to have it be a grade below/above. I think that working within year groups is a good idea (5A observing 5B)
- 10. Anything else you can add...
  - a. It was a really valuable experience that helped me to engage with my peers in a new way.



## Appendix I Teachers' Reflections on Instructional Rounds

### Rachel's Reflection

What are your thoughts and feelings about the process?

I thought that it was great opportunity to observe and share practices each other. I think the rounds promote a collaborative environment where teachers are provided the chance to discuss and reflect on best practices.

What do you think you've learned about this process?

I learned that this process is not evaluative, it's more of a sharing process, which then creates dialogue and ideas. It's also a way for us to reflect on our own teaching and how we grow as educators.

What challenges did you encounter?

The independent practice portion of my lesson was more task driven than I usually plan for during writers workshop. Some students seemed to be a bit thrown off by being given this specific task during the independent practice section of the workshop. Although consistency is important, it was good for me to see that students need to be flexible when the usual structure is tweaked a bit, and that I need to provide that opportunity more often.

How "usual" to your practice was the lesson observed?

Aside of assigning the task of the "6 room traits" during independent practice instead of using it as a suggestion for planning, it was very "usual".

What difference does **sticking** to evidence make to your conversations about student learning?

It allows for effective more critical thinking and conversation, it's more factual and less opinion based perhaps. What are the teacher's objectives for the lesson and based on the student's performance and understanding, were those objectives met.

In the light of the data, what would be reasonable for you/for us to do to support our professional learning in support of student learning?

Based on the first reflection/discussion as a group, decide what is the biggest change/improvement that could be implemented. Decide on a goal as a group or individual goals. Teachers try it out and then have it observed. This second round of observations could be more specific to the teacher's goal and all data collected should be based around the evidence related to the goal. Then reflect again as a group and come up with next steps from there.

How will we know if educators do anything with this learning?

After deciding on a goal, come up with a rubric type plan of what this will look like when effectively implemented. Educators can record themselves teaching or have colleagues observe again. We could look at individual student work and see where implementation can continue from there.

Are there any suggestions you would make about the future use of Instructional Rounds?

## Appendix I Teachers' Reflections on Instructional Rounds

### Harry's Reflection

What do you think you've learned through this process?

I have a better understanding of the instructional rounds process and its focus. Watching other teachers in this way was a valuable experience because it allowed me to reflect on my own teaching in terms of the children's learning in a new way.

How do you feel about this process?

I'm looking forward to trying it again. I think the benefits will get better and better.

How do you understand student learning through this process?

I am not completely aware of the process. From what I understand now, I think observing another teacher and focusing on what the children are doing and not doing etc allows me to empathize with the children's experience as learners.

What challenges did you encounter?

In a way, it is very difficult to be a neutral observer. I also struggled with trying not to evaluate the teacher because that seemed pointless at times. I'm curious about how we proceed.

How 'usual' to your normal practice was the lesson observed?

The format of the lessons I observed were, in general, similar to what I do when I'm doing lessons like that. School seems to consist of a lot of other times too: worktimes, reviews, etc. Maybe I should try to do less of that other kind of thing.

What difference does **sticking** to evidence make to your conversations about student learning?

Our first conversation relied on evidence but our main focus, our main take away, perhaps, ended up being about the structure of teacher lessons so maybe we'll do more with student learning observations next time.

In the light of the data, what would be reasonable for you/for us to do to support our professional learning in support of student learning?

I think I agree with the idea that we could tighten up our lesson structures, their focus, including the emphasis on direct instruction as defined in our packet.

How will we know if educators do anything with this learning?

That will depend on what individual teachers take away from the conversations and from the observational experiences themselves. I expect it will make teachers more comfortable with each other if done right. We'll see the changes in the school culture as teachers see themselves joined with other teachers. We'll see it in individual classrooms in ways that reflect teachers' deeper awareness of the children's experiences during their lessons and as they pass through the grades.

Are there any suggestions you would make about the future use of Instructional Rounds?

## **Appendix I Teachers' Reflections on Instructional Rounds**

It is very important that teachers feel completely comfortable, certain and absolutely assured that the process is entirely free of backlash or condemnation, no matter what. Perhaps new teachers should first observe the process without being included in observations so that they can see the reflection portion and get a feel that reflection and improved student learning is the goal.

Anything else you can add...

Er, maybe it could replace some other meeting times since it accomplishes the goals of some Thursday meetings as well as some weekly meetings at grade level.

## Appendix I Teachers' Reflections on Instructional Rounds

### Mark's Reflection

What do you think you've learned through this process?

Overall, it was good to see other people's practice and reflect on how those practices can be built upon and adapted in my classroom.

How do you feel about this process?

Although a bit intimidating at first because of not knowing the process or expectation, I think it was a good experience and look forward to doing it again. It may not be necessary to observe a whole 40 minute block, perhaps just a targeted part, such as the "mini lesson". intro of learning intentions, etc..

How do you understand student learning through this process?

I'm not sure I can make any statements on this after just 1 round. Although it wasn't the purpose I think more insight was gained into teacher practice and how more continuity/common practice can be pursued moving forward.

What challenges did you encounter?

How 'usual' to your normal practice was the lesson observed?

I think the lesson was pretty similar to a normal lesson in the "guided" stage for this particular topic. The timing may have been a bit "forced" to try to accommodate the observers. But the overall structure was similar to what I would do in other lessons of this type.

What difference does **sticking** to evidence make to your conversations about student learning?

Again, it is difficult to say anything about this based on 1 round of observation, but similar to conversations we had in the past, it rightly moves the focus away from teacher practices and focuses on student learning.

In the light of the data, what would be reasonable for you/for us to do to support our professional learning in support of student learning?

How will we know if educators do anything with this learning?

Are there any suggestions you would make about the future use of Instructional Rounds?

I would like to see a "focus" for the rounds. For example, if grade 6 or 4 and 5 were working a particular trait/literary element... at the same time it would be nice to do an instructional round at that time to see what students are learning at each level which would help to bridge any gaps or add complexity if needed.

Anything else you can add...

**Appendix J:**

**Instructional Rounds Group Debrief Meeting**

Sandra: I don't know how we want to do this, but I put this together, (Harry joking) I have to share yours, so just to think of the objective is to see what effective strategies are being used across grades and how we might horizontally and vertically align instruction is a big thing and I don't know if any of use got to this which is what students are learning you know out of their mouths, you know but that could be, but that could the next, another focus for another set of rounds or where it goes. And then this one is to see what way we can answer these kinds of focus questions, so it's more about how we are building consistency across the grades or what we can learn from each others practice, so I don't know how people analysis or (Harry: Is this my ... 1:16) Yeah, of course. How uhm, maybe I can tell you what I did, I went through the four lessons and looked at them in relation to these criteria and tried to come up with what I thought the patterns were, or not even patterns just the main things that I noticed in relation to those. Do we want to share how we analysis it, or?

Mark: Ah, I mean I just looked at a few of these questions I guess to see where these kind of being met, for example, like - what was the nature of scaffolding, you know, was there scaffolding happening, what point or something like that, just to kinda, a little more like a checklist sort of, then evaluating and I guess (S. yes,)

Ellen: I looked at the same thing and I just tried, and when I was taking notes, I was trying to, like italicize like verbs so like participating, discussing, questioning, so it kind of made it a little bit easier, but yeah I just pulled out keywords like graphic organizer, questioning, prior knowledge, cooperative learning, independent practice, modeled, guided

Rachel: Yeah, I kinda tried to go along with these questions and then point out observations that were consistent across so for the learning objectives and then that was everyone's specifically stated and I went through engagement tasks, building on prior knowledge, just where I saw these and the class. I didn't finish, but tried to start and uhm, and then when I retyped them I just kind of went through and put a heading on each part of the lesson, so the objective being presented then the model, independent model, independent practice (S. Yeah) and the closure all that. That's kind of how I organized it.

Harry: Yeah, I kind of just, I mean I didn't have time to do all of this so I just looked at, I figured I'd go with the archiving consistence, I was trying to see if I noticed anything, I wasn't sure what the rigor questions exactly, I was, so I just, I just reread them once or twice to see if I had any ideas about rigor and then like students doing, like, I liked that one about like if students did everything they were expected to do, what would they, so when I reread it I was just trying to visualize it, OK so if they were doing what I was doing and what Mark was doing, what with and I had any observations I tried to write it down, but I don't know if I came up with to much, but (S. Yeah) I guess that's what with over time (S. Yeah) maybe who knows but 4:18

## Appendix J Instructional Rounds Group Debrief Meeting

Sandra: So do we want to go through the questions? Would that be a way to do it?

Harry: I think so we might as well try (S. OK)

Sandra: What did we think then about the learning intentions?

Harry: learning intentions?

Sandra: And success criteria like did we see them?

Mark: I think the learning intentions were pretty clear, right, that was students they were pretty simple and straight forward. I think that students should be able to understand what the learning intentions was and what exactly they were meant to be doing or meant to be learning. (Ellen: I noticed) what they were working on

Ellen: The learning intentions were clear and then Harry, I don't know if you were aware of it, but you erased your success criteria off the board like 5 different times, and because you were using it so explicitly like, you were like, "Oh, I'm going to put that back on there." and I think the kids really got that your graphic organizer was directly helping them to unpack what the success criteria was for figurative language. (Harry: amazing) No you did. So you had the graphic organizer. (Harry: I remember erasing) but that was the success criteria of the lesson really, right (Harry: hum) to us similes (5:46).

Harry: But I was also thinking because ah like sometimes I try to prepare the success criteria ahead of time because you know like sometimes all into making a checklist. Sometimes you do teach something a few times before you like you know I might have a checklist for summaries and I've used the DRA rubric, but I didn't make my checklist, I have my checklist for summaries for a few years, I've been in the fourth grade for awhile now, but I might have made it the second year. You know what I mean, like sometimes, and so for that lesson I don't have it typed out, but like for personification I've taught personification for several years, but it's not as if I have or even, it's not like I have the checklist written down, so I think it's a, you make it explicit, sometimes and I might write it on the board and I might write it on the board the next time, sometimes I might make a poster for it, and eventually I'll I guess write it up as a sheet. Especially if you use it all the time, like even this morning I realized, Oh, Yeah the girls they were rereading their similes that they had made, but I kind of changed my success criteria was just listed on the board. I just said, Just make sure there's simile that has to have like or as. And then I basically said, Just make sure it's a comparison like some of them aren't doing that and then I said, Just make sure it isn't a cliché, but I feel like there's so many success criteria all day long. That they all, you could not prepare people.

Sandra: I think that's what I noticed as well. Like the difference that some were written and some were oral. In some of the classes it was, and maybe that's what it's about it's having that .... (7:20) I did notice there were written and oral ones.

Ellen: But this is a working group for your implementation of this next year. (S. Yes,) I mean like think it's ok. I think we're all comfortable to have like (Mark: Yeah) a value of comments made because we're trying to find out what the success criteria will be for next year, right. (S. Yes,) so I think it's probable ok for us to note the differences and then say, Well, how would that guide (Mark: Yeah) or

## Appendix J Instructional Rounds Group Debrief Meeting

Mark: I think even though we were talking I think with Harry that even though we're not meant to evaluate I'm evaluating other people's lessons in terms of well that was an interesting lesson I can do a similar thing what would I change to more fit my classroom or whatever, so you are evaluating it not that, Well I wouldn't do that because it wasn't good. I wouldn't do that because I would change it based on the exact lesson I wanted to teach. (S. Yeah) right, I wouldn't teach the same exact thing he taught, but sure we will talk about personification so you know are evaluated in terms of your own self, right so I think we can talk a little about evaluation.

Harry: When you say evaluation you mean we are not going to be doing like our evaluation are going to be more, ah well can be rather hard because the evaluation should be more toward the pattern. (S, Yeah, yeah towards the) (Mark: what's effective) agreeing together Sandra, Harry and Mark (8:48).

Harry: And I did learn something from that because like sort of what I was saying the success criteria can't always be written down and they are in your head and you are communicating them but there are times when I have a lesson and I might notice it during time, I think, like I was saying to Mark earlier I almost feel like the eventual consequence of this conversation will hopefully be tighter lessons with smaller success criteria or less, because I kind of felt like sometimes my lessons can be not convoluted but almost because like for example with your lessons, I was saying to Mark earlier they had theme in there, I'm not sure how you do it probably neither are you but right now but with this whole circle as I was watching I was thinking wow there's a whole lot of stuff in there. And so some kids can handle that and some kids can't (S. Yeah) so then and I know I do it myself, I might do a lesson and I'll think ok why did that not quite work and I'll realize so and that's what we're trying to figure out, so then if you are teaching something over and over enough times you're going to be trying to figure out how do I sift this, (S. Yeah) and that's the hard part.

Sandra: I actually, you're I think going into something I noticed too, it's like where are we taking the learning objectives or like learning intentions and the success criteria from because maybe it's going back into the scope and sequence breaking them down to be more simplified because I noticed definitely like broad versus narrow learning objectives, I think that's pretty much what you're saying.

Harry: But you have to because it's hard (S. Yeah) because, like yours, was a three day lesson two or maybe and mine.

Ellen: It's really the unit kind of focus) (S. Yeah) and we had each day broken down like - today we are using a model text, I think we tried to do that we did a model guided, but we talked about the timing, like maybe it should like you be gone in, and you say, I'm going to come in the first time and it's your class and you kind of walk away or maybe it would be valuable to see how like how people are beginning things because really one 40 min. block isn't how I would have handled that anyways, it would have been more like a 60 min kind of thing with like a workshop component, but my thing trying to work within the constraints of 40 min period.

Harry: That's a good point, so it might be better next year to be doing might not have to free up whole blocks, it might be like I'm going to be see the beginning some lessons, some ends, and I'll see

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Rachel: The teaching the mini lesson (S. Yeah) like the first 15 min.

Harry: Or I want to see the routine or something and maybe we will just come in after your lesson begins and you've got them in the workshop mode or you know, who knows

Sandra: OK, I think we are kind of saying the same things. About, like breaking down learning objectives and into smaller pieces and the same with the success criteria. And then, can we go on to the next one (11:54).

Sandra: How was the learning engagement or task presented?

Mark: I, I mean I think we all did a similar thing of modeling it more or less yourself, or with, you guys kind of did it more on your own I think, you went through it, by presenting what you were going to be doing your example, right. You kind of did fairly similar thing gave your examples of how you were feeling, right and we kind of did it more, asking the class to respond, but they had already, they had all that information already we were using a shared experience of the white giraffe well you were, sorry.

(All speaking at once) 12:45 (schema, it would organize their schema)

Ellen: But we all had a graphic organizer I think is how we structured it, for the kids, like to (Mark: Yeah) structured their thinking and unpack it. (Mark: Yeah) or some sort of visual

Harry: It was like different, yeah, basically it was all activating schema.

Rachel: It was kind of a release, like a model and then release them to work with partners, then come back, go over what you did with your partner, then another task, do it on your own or with your partner, and then go over it with the class. That kind of thing

Harry: It's related to the chunking to because I think that's where it gets hard because like going back, going back, going back ends up not being one lesson on most, sometimes.

Sandra: Can you explain that a bit more?

Harry: Well, I'm not sure I was thinking explicitly when I anything I saw, but I remember I was trying to make it simple enough so it was like what do you call it, like one phase of the lesson, like one you introduce, (Rachel: It was like scaffolding) new idea, model it or whatever, or after getting some schema going, introduce the new idea, let them work on it, and then end the lesson hopefully. But it was to complicated for that, so like I was trying to figure out well how I want to do cycles of that, I was almost thinking. I don't know if that's a rule or if you have to, but I was given their present knowledge (Mark: You mean like a shorter like 4 20 min sessions over a course of where instead of one 60 minutes,) yeah, not even sure, because I felt lucky the day, because I was going to go see where ever I'm at on Friday I'll just do whatever on that 14:21 (might re-listen to this it is hard to follow Harry's thoughts) and I felt pretty lucky on Thursday night because I felt it's a good thing we finished personification, because I feel like they have something to bite off of, but in a perfect world they'd probably have a little bit more familiarity with even the figurative language at that point, do you know what I mean? Because they did



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have some idea because they knew what personification, I don't think in a lot of their minds, they, not all of the kids in their minds even know the difference. They don't know that personification is the example of figurative language, some of them, you can, you know, you would know they did wouldn't, you know what I mean. Just like this morning when I asked the class, I forget what I asked them. It was Isabella and I said, " Can you give me an example of some of the figurative language we gone over and she said, voice." You know what I mean, which is like, but you don't want to be like that, but you almost are, like wow, how can you not be slotting it, but so your trying to figure out, you have to simplify it so much, but it's really hard to teach a lesson on almost anything without those other things sticking out.

Mark: Right - the schema is, like you know that those are, those are something else, right, those are traits, (Harry: Yeah) that's right, yeah (15:33).

Harry: So I don't know and I felt like what I was trying to handle was less complicated than what you guys were kind of handling, because I felt like sometimes you guys had a work time going, I'm not sure who it was or if it was both of you, but it would be, and then it would stop. So like you were saying like they would work on it. But I guess what you were doing after is activating schema and then you went back to the whole class. You guys went back to whole class group a couple of times. You know I don't think that's a bad thing, but I was wondering about it. (S. uhm),

Rachel: Yeah, I can see what you are saying you would have done it in different - days because the success criteria and I think I don't know if I have the sheet but there were a few different areas if the kids were reading it they would have seen, like the first part of the lesson that you wanted them to build their schema to kind of talk about what has taken part in their store, just to get their minds going, get them to thinking and then the second part I think was and inferring bit, kind of inferring what is going on in the family and then, I think, prediction was in the third, but I noticed that some of the kids I think had read the success criteria and when they were suppose to be talking about their schema or using their schema they were wanting to make predictions, so badly and it was kind of like are they doing that because they saw that as part of the success criteria but you weren't at that part of the lesson yet you wanted to kind of build up to that or where they, I don't know, it was just kind of like, I don't know if like that I could have seen so schema one day and then inferring the next and then predicting the next day. (Mark: uhm Yeah) or just maybe some how - I don't know.

Mark: But I think in terms of what you were saying before, since those things have been talked about so much the ideas that we don't need a less on this everybody should know schema as soon as I say it or point to it because we've done that if every, if things are broken down so small where you can't use an idea without mini lessoning, (Harry: Yeah, Yeah) then that's problematic I think I don't know if that would be so effect that (Harry: It's hard) everything needs to be unpacked - schema should be pretty good in your head, right because it's talked about so much that (Ellen: I think also the book that we have (Mark: also) has a spoiler on the back (Rachel: ah) so the kids were not using (Mark: Yeah) necessarily the schema from the part of the book we had already read, they were using the blurb on the back. (Everyone: uh, yeah,,,) That would be unrealistic you would even come up with those predictions, so that's why I think that it was sort of hard for the kids to stick with it. (Everyone: uh, yeah,,,)

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Sandra: I had it more like (Harry: that's a specific scenario then)

Mark: If we did the next lesson there was nothing on the back there was no - they didn't know anything else, all they knew was up to here, then you've got to come up with the ideas to (Ellen: using the plot more) carry you to the theme, so it was more successful, I think for students to see how it worked.

Sandra: that went through my head, I wrote a question too, because the success criteria I think was, How were they, like how are they developing ideas. And there was almost they jumped to what you're saying the prediction like what were the ideas that were developed they were identified them rather than looking for the structure or strategies

Ellen: they knew, I think they knew the journey 19:29 by Demilous already with them, so they did know they wanted to slot those things in there because they were excited about (S. & Mark: Yeah) having the right answer because they, I think they knew the organizer.

Harry: Yeah, it's interesting having the right answer, it's like almost sometimes the lesson needs to be designed to subvert their habit of wanting to have a cut and dry answer or something, I don't know, but it is just, I don't know sure what it has to do with, I don't think it has to do with, I don't think it necessarily, I guess that's more lesson planning and the problem of lesson planning rather than just a specific writing though.

Sandra: Yeah, I've got to that too. Uhm, can we look at this one (20:06)?

Is it worth looking on at this one - How did the teacher build on students prior knowledge, introduce new concepts, provide an opportunity to practice and ... or do we think we've done that in relation to even what we have said about the lessons. Yeah (talking over each other but seem to agree)

Sandra: What do we like students were learning

Ellen: I think that might be tied into the comments about too broad or maybe the expectations. When that question, if every student was doing what we said what would the learner look like, I felt kind of like well I think my expectations are actually higher than what I was teaching, like when I think about what I a good learner is, I'm constantly thinking of the kids that goes above and beyond or who is using mastering level of like ideas, organization, and voice and it is just so successful that I sometimes think that my expectations of what a good learner is, are actually above like maybe where I'm teaching I don't know if my teaching is challenging. (Mark: uhm, Harry: Really) because when I think about if every kid exactly what I taught, yeah, maybe, but I don't know because when we were talking about too many learning, you are pulling into many things may be in a lesson or your expectations are too high, don't..

So I mean, one thing to go, so we all did writing lesson, right, with all those learning intentions, success criteria, in the past, I would make it sort of very specific like the heading of your notebook for the next two weeks write Ideas on top of every page. That's what you're learning about ideas, or word choice or sentence fluency and is not a convoluted, you will know you are learning about idea when you've filled out a graphic organizer in the pattern. It was just a little more focused. Ok, we're prewriting, that is

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what we are doing, prewriting, prewriting, prewriting nothing else keeping it extremely simple in those six traits that we focus on you are either learning about a trait or working on a trait or somewhere in the writing process. Right,

Harry: That's what I was feeling, I was even telling my class the other day that I almost felt that they should slot it in either of those two places. (Mark & Harry: Yeah, your doing one of those things, so it fits)

Mark: And we are doing different activities in there, but that's what we are focusing on that's what's the learning intention to prewrite, to develop your ideas

Rachel: Yeah, new strategies for developing ideas

Mark: Like the success criteria would not be you filled out that six room thing in your room because that's what we're telling you to do, so that's a very like low level, OK you did what I asked you to do, that's not really success necessarily. The success would be two weeks later you actually used it because you knew that was a good prewrite strategies

Rachel: Yeah, or you used multiple strategies to come up with ideas

Harry: Or you used a version of it (Mark: you used a version of it or some prewriting strategy, right, because even in my class when we did that and then we said ok now we are independent writing, right, use this to brainstorm and then we will start writing a story about it. Do I have to use this, because I already have, and it's you missed the point of that, this is a prewriting skill you know what I mean and if it's a famous author told us that all famous authors use this we should try, that's what we're doing just trying it. You know, to not try it

Sandra: Actually, when - I know this is jumping in a little bit - it's about your question about rigor, I was thinking that if we were a little more explicit about - This is a graphic that we are using to generate ideas and your 6 box one was a graphic which you did really clearly about this is what we're doing. I think the kids would know that hey by the end of fourth grade I've got this graphic, this graphic, and this strategy to generate ideas rather it's to generate the ideas just making it tweaking it to put more emphases on it. I don't know the at was the piece I took around it (Harry: Well hopefully that was not isolated )

Harry: All though I don't know if ours was isolated like that because I think, I mean I think, I'm pretty sure it was, they all knew that the clock was. Because, when they were asking the question about it doesn't fit all stories and (S. Yeah) and you let that, goes the possibility you let it hang that well, you might find that it fits more than you'd expect kind of thing, right, (Mark agrees) so what I think you're also saying is like the girl goes, the student says do I need to use this and the answer almost is well if you give me a story that gives me what it is suppose to do. Well no, if you did it without, but if you give me a story that is missing a middle turns out maybe the answers right, (Mark agrees) it's almost kind of like (S. you did that) what part are you thinking about (Mark agrees), when you ask that, are you just hoping, like one girl was like can I go to the homilies? 25:31 can I skip the journey, that girl you need it, because almost (Mark agrees) because you don't get why you have to have it.

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Sandra: And you made that really clear to with the 6 window on that you can use this as a strategy and then I walked in in this morning and you were saying, "Now what part of that could we change?" It was looking at this century language. Like feeling, touch and putting that in there.

Harry: But sometimes the children like they do, what do you call it? like they're over, you know like when I was doing a list of similes based on, or did I get to that part yet? (S. You did start) remember I had the list and they, so we made them ok, so we made a poem the other day where we took that list and it really wasn't, we just went through the list, but what I always see after that is sometime, then they'll be kids now and I'll talk to them about how now this is just for, we just made a list of practice making similes and I'm going to call it a poem, it was about a hairclip, but I was like, and I'm going to ask you guys to write a poem but eventually you're just going to be writing poems over here and this list is just to help you when you think it's time for some figurative language it doesn't mean you have to do a list of similes but even though you say that, you know what I mean, like some children will get, they not even just like far was very little but some like there own spectrum of literal, like they will just, will they almost want to turn it into an activity, you know what I mean (26:53).

Sandra: Is that, I don't know if I'm reading that right but is that also some kids you know when they are learning to put ed on the end of the word literally everything's gotten and ed on it or two ss on it that they're really using (Harry: over extended or something like that) it until they know it and then they can move on to something else. (J. perhaps) I don't know.

Sandra: Students actively participating in the learning process?

Harry: I don't think I saw any problems or I don't know if we call them problems, but that I mean

Rachel: Everybody seemed engaged the, I don't know, I always get so, kind of like stuck with the leaning process thing, because I see it is like not necessarily a one lesson thing. It's kind of like a progression right, I don't know. So like to apply the learning process in one lesson like, what do you see in the process, like what do you want to see as the process, or in the process with in a lesson, you know.

Mark: What would be the success criteria (S. yeah) for knowing that, what would you, what would that look like somewhere.

Sandra: I was just looking at engagement too, like what you were looking at, like the kids when you had them all put their heads down on the desk, there were so many hands up or they were all giggling you know you could see it or the comments that were coming from it and I suppose the strategies that were using to know if kids are engaged or not, like the turn and talk partner, you could see they were engaged you could see, you know there were different ways you used popsicles or something. I was just looking at what our strategies were in relation to how we were looking for engagement. You asked you both asked a lot of questions and the kids were feeding back at that level.

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Rachel: And them working in partners when they would turn and write together and share. And they were asking each other questions so they know to, you know, comfortable asking for clarity from their partners and their groups.

Harry: It does sometimes feel like that because they are kids or whatever that you are going to have to no matter what it's almost like we're going to have to force structures in, maybe it's best to have varies structures, because they're kids. I mean they're kids you do have to constantly, I means some years are worse, some kids are, I mean you're wrestling with them to make them engaged, and I don't mean just like the learning support students sometimes, do you know what I mean, like it's interesting to me like I feel like they're some kids I feel like it is a struggle to force them to stay engaged, you know, and so yeah you do have to have these different, like the popsicles stick thing sometimes, or not even using that to just calling up people, sometimes I call up people how don't have their hands up or whatever, but I don't know, but I guess that's just the list of what you call it classroom procedure or protocols.

Ellen: A lot of things I heard when I was doing all composing, like not engaged learners, but engaged in learning and so I think in my lesson, there was a modeling lesson, so I think my kids were engaged in the modeling lesson. Yours was going between modeling and independent or guided practice and your kids were engaged in that you were doing whole class modeling and scaffolding after that and they were engaged and your kids were using that in small groups so I mean that's - would the learning process for that was different for all classes. We were all seemed like we were at the beginning and we were moving towards independent practice, that this was like an intro guided modeled lessons, like I think all four of them. There was not any kind of deep seeded, like deep knowledge going on we were all at the surface level either learning and applying to or like learning to apply a new structure or a new graphic organizer, I mean the kids had knowledge of the traits, in the writing process, but I think, yeah, where the students actively engaged absolutely and it's important to remember that your seeing a lesson that's on modeling in a 40 minute block or two hour block - Harry, hint, you know, you went to almost independent practice because we saw an awfully long lesson.

Harry: Yeah, so you by deep you mean, sort of like, that would be practice so that developed during the workshop time or during (E. we weren't really there, I mean we saw a little bit of it with Rachel's) that's what I mean yeah, you'd have to walk up to someone's writers workshop or after they had done all that or like that, the day after I did that and then they are writing their similes or something.

Ellen: Well, I mean unless you are observing for a long time and we didn't get to see the end of Rachel's lesson because you just can't slam it all in there in 40 minutes. Because I think most of us ? Ready 32:14, I mean for a big (32:19).

That is what I would say with kids first learning, the learning the process, yes and the learning process was different, what we were asking them to be engaged in was different for each class (Harry and Rachel agree)

Sandra: Can I jump in (Harry: What did you think of it the engagement?) I looked at it from the level from what strategies were being used to get kids engaged and I was writing those down and trying to think about those probably, maybe because I'm looking at rigor across, not, or the consistency across classes or kids having you know the same

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kind of strategies and cues to get into learning to see, that's where I looked at it, which was interesting. Because I did come back to what you were saying, that I think you do need that repertoire of different strategies and knowing the kids and things like that. Can we just, time is so short can we just, I'm sorry, if we were to look at the last one - What do we think that, you know, what would we recommend or the rigor in relation to professional learning or should we just stop here now and have a think about that.

Harry: Have a think about this last one pedagogical move(s)?

Sandra: Yeah, like what would we do in relation to, what do we think the next steps for our own professional learning or for

Ellen: To me I think it's common language. That would be the only thing I think (agreement from Rachel) for looking how this is going to impact student learning, not just teachers' practice to engage in that or group that just having I know that in grade four that the kids have used this, this, this, I thought they (S. can you give me some examples) the 6 room thing, I thought having a graphic organizer that allows the kids not only to do imagery but ask questions really took their poetry to a new level by having that question into the poem I thought that was like awesome and I wish in my five years I had done, used graphic organizer for that I think I need to know exactly what teachers have been using,

Harry: and where do we, because I like that, I hope that didn't come from 4th grade somewhere that triangle of details because I don't remember that

Sandra: That came from Carl Anderson didn't it? His workshops

Ellen: Harry doesn't go to those extra weekends (Harry: I had a partner I used to talk to a lot)

Sandra: There is a great book out there

Laughter

Rachel: Yeah, I think so too - consistent language, as well, consistent like the language that we use for throughout the lessons, you know, consistent format/structure of the lesson, I think because then not only will they know the way a lesson should go, they'll know, I mean that in itself is success criteria, I mean they know what they need to accomplish by the end of this lesson, they know they are going to have this time to practice or you know (S. Agree)

Sandra: I also thought that if we could, taught lessons to would be a great one to do, but student ownership of the learning intentions is probably what you are talking about. And I didn't catch it your said, engaged in learning

Ellen: Through, like they're not just engaged in a task, but they're learning because they are engaged they are not learning in token (?) you know what I mean?

Sandra: Right,

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Ellen: Just that -it's not a learning engagement, they are engaged in learning, like it's not an activity that

Harry: like the activity doesn't hook them in it should be learning itself

Ellen: They are engaged because they are learning.

Harry: Yeah, it's like on the report card - their role and responsibility of learners, like their role, not just math, like you should be engaged in it

Sandra: So then is it explicit teaching as like what does a learner do if learning is, I wrote something down about student ownership about the learning intentions like they were small and so they were using them to guide what they were learning.

Harry: Are there, or just like there are, I forget what word you would use, but like for managing the class and trying to keep them engaged especially the once who don't stay engaged are there strategies or whatever that exist for trying to get them to, because we do say things like - Oh you should be, you know we do have the profile and things like that, but what else is there, (Ellen: That sounds like a tool box kind of thing, what's in your tool box?) Exactly,

Rachel: I think it also has to do with the structure, too. Like engagement like kids need consistence so they know this is what the teacher says when they are about to present the objective or the teaching point, like their ears perk up, they know that next the teacher expecting them to do this, in this there is a language, common words the teacher uses and then they know what's coming, so that just kind of "I'm conscious?" subconscious,, You know common phrases, they know - Oh, they know they are about to get instructions to do some I don't know.

## Appendix K

### Instructional Rounds Protocol

#### The purpose and process of instructional rounds

##### Request

1. Each teacher to teach a mini writing lesson based on/incorporating an objective from our literacy scopoe and sequence document. Hattie's work on direction instruction below, might help in structuring this mini lesson).
2. Observing teachers asked to take **descriptive** notes related to the 'instructional core'; what they saw and heard students and teachers doing with lesson.

*This observational practice "lays a foundation for a discussion that is grounded in observational data rather than any one person's assumptions about what should or should not be happening." Data can then be used to gain insight and make predictions about learning and teaching.*

3. **Debrief** - Individually analyze observational notes, note any data that seemed relevant to the 'problem of practice' and/or that seemed important. Share observational notes and set about collectively articulating any patterns noticed across classrooms. The focus - teacher's generating a common understanding of current practice. Roberts (2012), cautions that at this point, it is important participants adopt and retain a descriptive rather than an evaluative stance.

Use the focus questions below to help guide the debrief discussion and analysis of practice. Teachers are not expected to explicitly answer the exact focus questions, outlined below, but may use them as a framework to consider practice. Roberts (2012)

##### Focus Questions:

- What were the learning objective and success criteria?
- How was the learning engagement/task presented?
- How did the teacher build on students' prior knowledge, introduce new concepts, provide practice opportunity and gradual release to students?
- What are students learning?
- Were students actively and responsibly participating in the learning process?
- What was the nature of scaffolding and/or targeted support provided for all students to experience success?
- What concrete pedagogical moves might help teachers increase rigor in related to writing instruction in classrooms?

"if you were a student at this school and you did everything you were expected to do, what would you know and be able to do in relation to writing?"

(Adapted, Roberts, 2012)

Review and reflect on notes taken in light of your own professional development goals, identify any insights they may have gain from their observations in relation to these goals.



## **Appendix K Instructional Rounds Protocol**

**4. Next level of work** - Provide feedback in terms of 3-4 focused suggestions, action steps, about what they as individuals, and/or as a team or the school should do or learn next in light of the data to address issues of continuity and innovation to improve practice.

Protocol adapted from Roberts, 2012, City et al. 2009)

### **'Problem of Practice'**

The focus of rounds is to identify what consistently effective strategies are being used across the grades and to plan how we might best horizontally and vertically align instruction across the school to build on each other's literacy practice and ensure continuity of curricular experience for students. The objective is also to ascertain how students articulate their learning in relation to writing, specifically how do they answer the three guiding questions, "What am I learning? How am I going? Where to next?" Hattie (2012) The final objective is to advise/inform next steps in relation to the teaching and learning of writing.

### **Theory of action**

Roberts, (2012) also advise that a 'theory of action;' which articulates "the leader's best ideas, at the moment, about the steps they think will lead to improvement," is provided to participants to help guide the 'next level of work'

Research, (Roberts, 2012, p. 101) suggests that stepping into classrooms reveals a huge range of ideas about how children learn and what sorts of tasks result in learning. Observation of each other's practice related to writing instruction should lead to an increased sense of shared knowledge about the methodologies and resources used to teach the 6+1 Traits writing to students at this school. This increased insight will provide us with the chance to identify better ways to build on each other's practice and enhance student learning. These observations should also help us identify and validate what's already working, fill in any gaps in instruction, and innovate to design rigorous instruction, assessment and feedback to enhance student learning in writing. Research (Roberts, 2012) also suggests that if every teacher understands how his/her role impacts student performance and accepts personal responsibility for enabling all students to excel, then the achievement of students at all performance levels will accelerate.

### **Premise/purpose of Instructional Rounds**

- Offers a framework to learn from our own practices and at the school level, the opportunity to "create a model of how learning happens in the processes of your system" (Roberts, 2012)
- Offers structure to facilitate a professional community that engages in a continuous cycle of inquiry about instructional practice as it is happening in situ within a school context.
- Offers a structure in for teachers to talk about problems of practice, discuss strategies for improvement, observe and analyze each other's practice, and set goals for the next level of work. The approach "gives the system more potential leverage than a series of teacher-specific, individual interventions with/by teachers (Roberts, 2012, p. 5)

### **Direct Instruction**

Hattie, J., (2012) Visible Learning for Teachers (p. 72)

One of the more successful methods for maximizing the impact of teaching and enabling teachers to talk to each other about teaching is direct instruction. I know that many teachers find the mention of this phrase anathema to their concepts of desirable methods, but this because it is so often incorrectly confused with transmission or

## Appendix K Instructional Rounds Protocol

didactic teaching (which it is not). It is unfortunate that many implementations of direct instruction are based on purchased, pre-scripted lessons, which certainly undermines one of its major advantages - that is, teachers working together to create the lesson planning. The message here is not to prescribe this as 'the way' (although its average effect size of  $d=0.59$  places it among the more successful programs of which we are aware), but to introduce it as one method that demonstrates the power of teachers working together to plan and critique a series of lessons, sharing understanding of progression, articulating intentions and success criteria, and attending to the impact to student and teacher learning.

The method is more fully outlined in many places (including Hattie, 2009:204-7). First outlined by Adams and Engelmann (1996), direct instruction involves seven major steps.

Direct instruction demonstrates the power of stating the learning intentions and success criteria up front, and then engaging students in moving towards these. The teacher needs to invite the students to learn, needs to provide much deliberate practice and modelling, and needs to provide appropriate feedback and multiple opportunities to learn. Students need opportunities for independent practice, and then there need to be opportunities to learn the skill of knowledge implicit in the learning intention in contexts other than that in which it was directly taught.

There are two big messages from the *Visible Learning* research relating to direct instruction. The first is the power of *teachers working together critiquing their planning*. This raises the question of how to construct schools in which teachers talk to each other about teaching - not about the curriculum, students, assessment, conditions, or kicking footballs but about what they mean by 'challenge' 'progress', and 'evidence of the effects anticipated and gained from the lessons'. It is the critique that is powerful; purchasing ready-made scripts defeats a major source of the power of this method.

The second message is the power of designing and evaluating *lesson scripts*. Fullan, Hill and Crevola (2006) term these 'critical learning instructional pathways' (CLIPs). Their CLIPS include day-to-day detailed pathways from particular parts of the progression to others. Different students can start at different starting points and make different progress along these paths. The paths need to be built on the multiple ways in which students can learn, and allow for deviations to go back and try a different pathway to achieve progress. There is a high need for rapid formative interpretations of progress and feedback to the teacher and to the student on the success of how teachers are implementing their teaching, such that there is forward movement along the pathways in terms of student learning. Obviously, CLIPs require a very detailed understanding of learning in the domain, and require collaborative study of student progress in specifying these paths, and so on. The professionalism of teachers resides in their evaluative ability to understand both the effect of their interventions, and the status and progress of all of their students.

### Direct Instruction Protocol\*\*\*

1. Before the lesson is prepared, the teacher should have a clear idea of what the *learning intentions are*: what, specifically, should the student be able to do/understand/care about as a result of the teaching?
2. The teacher needs to know what *success criteria* of performance are to be expected, and when and what students will be held accountable for from the lesson/activity. As importantly, the students need to be informed about the standards of performance.

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3. There is a need to *build commitment and engagement* in the learning task - a 'hook' to grab the student's attention such that the student shares the intention and understands what it means to be successful.
4. There needs to be guides to *how the teacher should present the lesson* - including notions such as input, modelling, and checking for understanding.
5. *Guided practice* involves an opportunity for each student to demonstrate his or her grasp of new learning by working through an activity or exercise - such that the teachers can provide feedback and individual remediation as needed.
6. Closure involves those actions or statements that cue student that they have arrived at an important point in the lesson or at the end of a lesson, to help to organize student learning, to help to form a coherent picture, to consolidate, to eliminate confusion and frustration, and to reinforce the major points to be learned.
7. Independent practice then follows first mastery of the content, particularly in new contexts. For example, if the lesson is about inference from reading a passage about dinosaurs, the practice should be about inference from reading about another topic, such as whales. The advocates of direct instruction argue that the failure to follow this seventh step is responsible for most student failure to be able to apply something learned.

